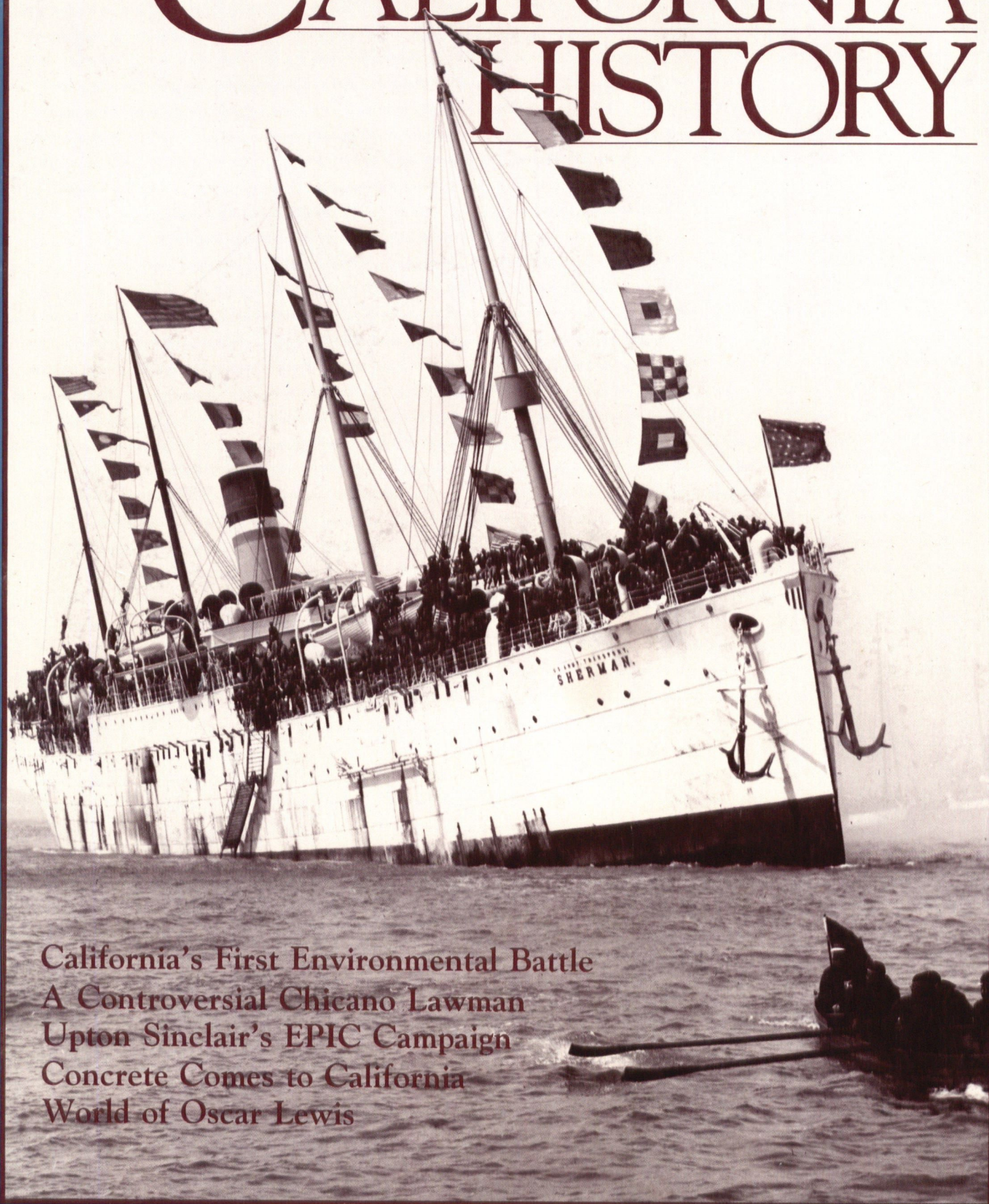


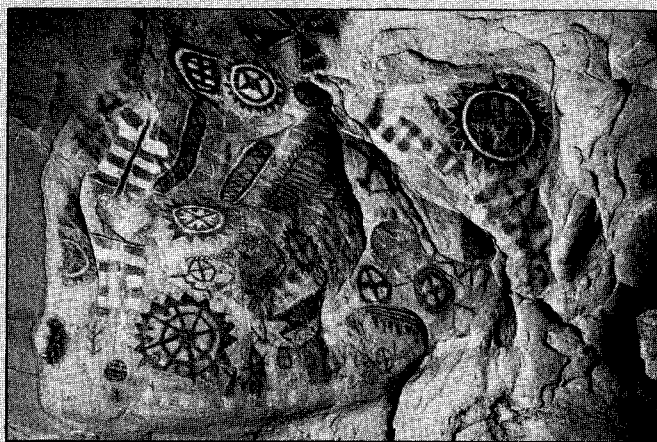
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FALL 1984

CALIFORNIA HISTORY



California's First Environmental Battle
A Controversial Chicano Lawman
Upton Sinclair's EPIC Campaign
Concrete Comes to California
World of Oscar Lewis



The California Historical Society is very grateful to Mr. Lawrence Barker, Jr., president of the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation, who has financially assisted production of this issue of *California History*.

TO: The Members of the California Historical Society
FROM: Lawrence Barker, Jr., President, L.S.B. Leakey Foundation

Why do our two organizations have so much in common? Because we are both deeply interested in history.

You may not have realized that we are both primarily interested in the study of our ancestors. The aim of the Leakey Foundation, named for the famed archaeologist Louis S.B. Leakey (1903–1972), is to foster research into our human origins, our evolving nature, and our environmental future. While the Leakey Foundation does not focus specifically on Man in California, whose ancestors entered the region only a score or more thousand years ago, the Foundation sponsors research projects throughout the world (Turkey, France, Viet Nam, England, Pakistan, and East Africa) as well as in our own backyard, San Bernardino.

The Leakey Foundation also presents educational programs—for example, in January 1985 a day-long symposium in Los Angeles on hunting and gathering peoples, Old World and New, to be conducted by five internationally renowned scientists. Our organization is also developing plans to study the Chumash Indian hunting-gathering culture which developed highly advanced rock paintings called petroglyphs. These educational activities, we believe, complement the California Historical Society's ongoing investigation of our more recent ancestors in California.

The Leakey Foundation believes that a better understanding of our history and our ancestors is vital because millions of years of physical and social habits have directly shaped the evolution of our brain and thus the way we think and act. While we are no longer hunter-gatherers (except perhaps at supermarkets), we must learn about our origins in an effort to avoid repeating past mistakes and to work for peaceful solutions to the increasingly dangerous problems facing the world.

If you are interested in our work and would like additional information, please write to the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation, Foundation Center 1-7, Pasadena, California 91125.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Barker

FRONT COVER: *Returning in 1898 from a victorious attack on the Philippine Islands, veterans crowding to the starboard side of the transport ship Sherman cause her to list toward the welcome docks of San Francisco. The "splendid little war" with Spain represented one of the United States's most romantic and successful expressions of the ideology of Manifest Destiny. California Historical Society, San Francisco*

ABOVE: *Chumash Cave Paintings, San Marco Pass, Santa Barbara County*

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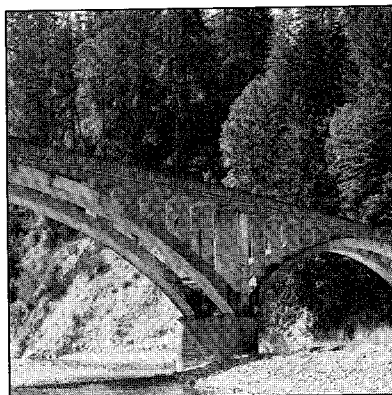
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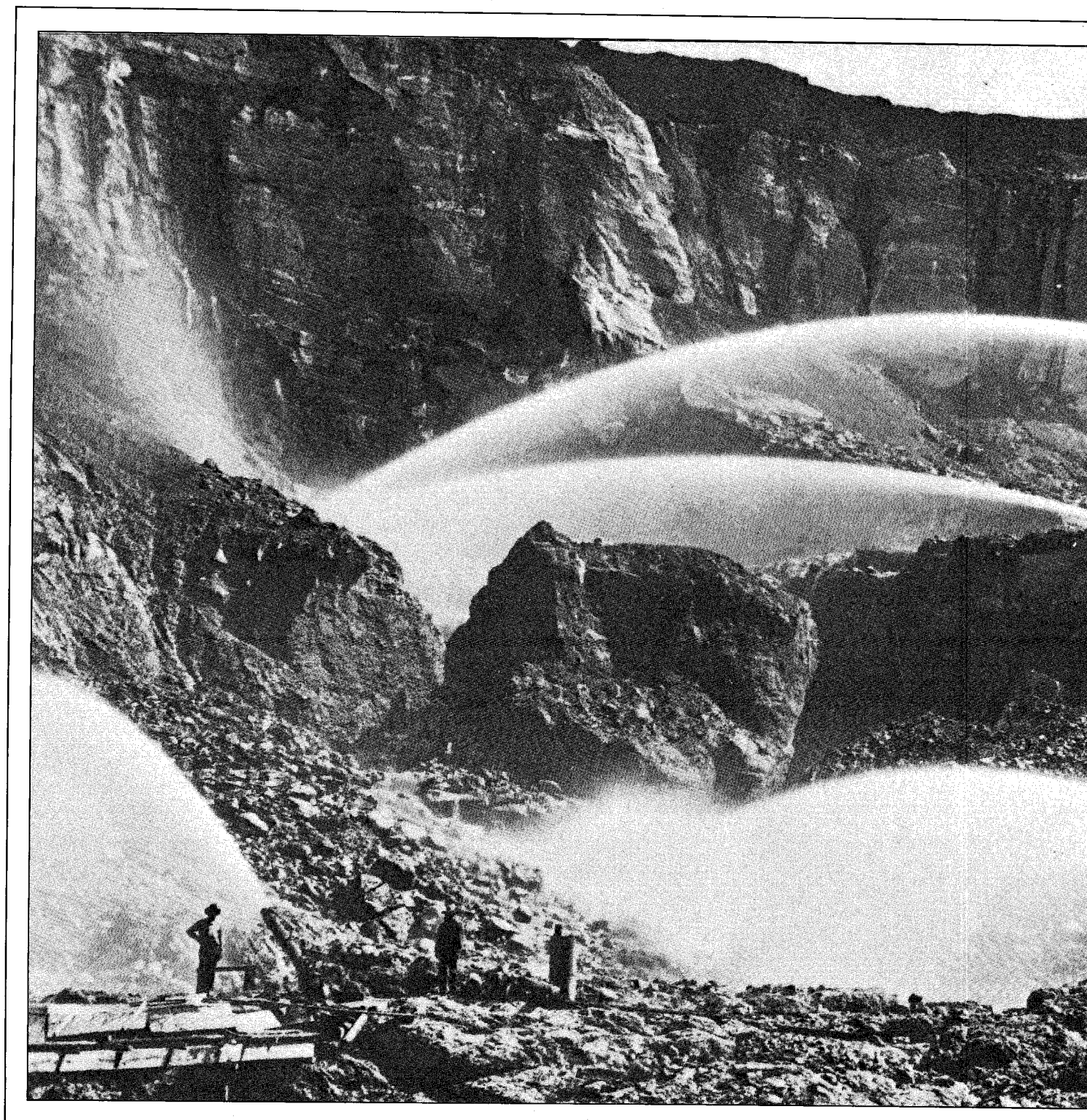
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Sacramento Valley farmers go to court
to stop the ravages of hydraulic mining

CALIFORNIA'S FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL BATTLE

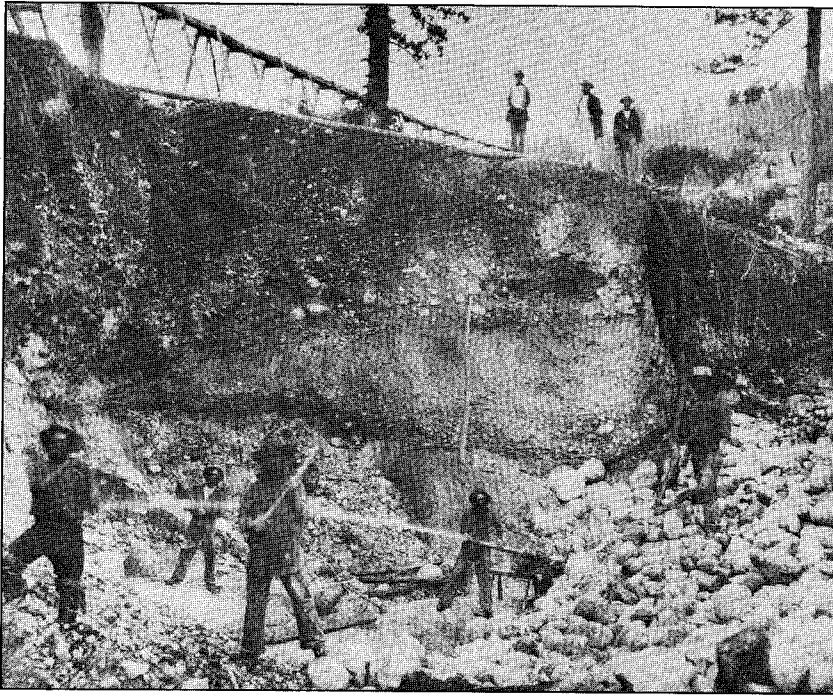
by Marilyn Ziebarth

On June 18, 1883, just after 5 a.m., California's great English Dam—thoroughly inspected for defects only three days earlier—mysteriously collapsed. A full reservoir of water roared down the steep canyon of the Yuba River, sweeping away houses, barns, covered bridges, and cattle. By the time the torrent finally broke through a levee east of Marysville and spread across 2,200 acres of Sacramento Valley farmland, seven people were dead.

"The break was not accidental," charged officials of the Milton Mining and Water Company, which had built the 130-foot-high dam to store Sierra snow melt and rain for its gold mining operation nearby. "The dam was blown up by powder." No suspects were ever identified despite the company's offering a \$5,000 reward, but there was little doubt that "valley guerrillas" were responsible for the sabotage. For almost three decades, hydraulic mining had been washing dirt and debris down into the valley, clogging the rivers and flooding farmland. By blowing up dams (the English was the fourth to collapse under mysterious circumstances), the farmers took away the water needed for gold mining.

But the battle between the miners and farmers ultimately would be won not with dynamite but with legal briefs. Seven months after the explosion—a century ago this year—federal judge Lorenzo Sawyer of the Ninth Circuit Court (then a trial

Reprinted from *California Lawyer*, August 1984. Copyright by
The State Bar of California, 1984.



(Overleaf) The vast Malakoff Diggins, largest hydraulic mining site in the Sierra, drew photographers like C.E. Watkins who made this confidence-inspiring view for potential English investors in 1871. Bancroft Library

In 1854, these Michigan Bluff miners experimented with shooting a small stream of pressurized water against a hillside, while well-dressed gentlemen, possibly investors, watch the operation from above. Wells Fargo Bank History Department.

court) declared the mine "tailings" that washed down the Yuba, Bear, Feather and American rivers to be "a public and private nuisance." His permanent injunction against hydraulic mining in the case of *Woodruff v North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Co.* (1884) 18 F 753 effectively shut down the industry that gave the Golden State its nickname.

Sawyer's decision was one of the first to recognize the necessity of state-imposed restraint on private industry for the purpose of conservation. The ruling was the culmination of a significant chapter in California's economic, political and legal history.

Hydraulic mining was introduced shortly after the first army of Forty-niners had panned most of the loose nuggets out of Sierra river bars, gulches and canyons. By pumping pressurized water through canvas hoses reinforced with iron hoops, ingenious miners washed the compacted lighter soil away from the heavy gold-bearing gravel. This method enabled even relatively poor gold deposits to be worked cheaply and profitably, thereby revolutionizing the mining industry. Before long it was the principal method for mining gold.

By 1870, both the hoses and mines were much larger.

Marilyn Ziebarth is the editor of *California History* magazine.

Marysville became a walled city with the Yuba and Feather rivers flowing 20 feet above the level of its streets.

Water cannons capable of blasting jets more than 100 feet worked around the clock in mines that looked like giant amphitheaters. The water, wrote a *Nevada City Transcript* reporter, was "worried and tumbled and beaten into foam until one might easily believe that it comes out with not merely the force of gravity, but also with a wicked, vicious, unutterable indignation." Huge rocks "fly like chaff when struck by the stream of water . . . [although] the actual work of tearing down the cliff is hard to see, for there is a cloud of red foam hanging over the spot and an incessant roar."

Hydraulic mining depended upon a sure and abundant supply of water. To this end mining companies built more than 5,000 miles of canals, pipelines and water delivery systems. These carried literally billions of gallons of water daily from newly dammed reservoirs to the mines. The investment paid off. The yearly output of California's mines averaged \$10 million over the next 30 years, making mining the most important industry west of the Rocky Mountains in the 1870s and early 1880s.

As the hydraulic mining operations grew, so did the amount of debris being washed into the rivers. Concerns about the environmental impact of mining tailings had been expressed as early as 1856, but hydraulicking was still in its technological infancy, and the tailings that eventually turned clear streams to turbid gruel were still lodged high in mountain canyons. Slowly, the waste came down the rivers into the valley, gradually raising the water level. Heavy rains in 1862 led to flooding, and valley dwellers were forced to dig themselves out from the slickens. But drought through the rest of the decade curtailed hydraulic mining, and life on the farms returned to normal.

Then, in the early 1870s, the river bottoms started to fill with silt, causing the water to rise dramatically.

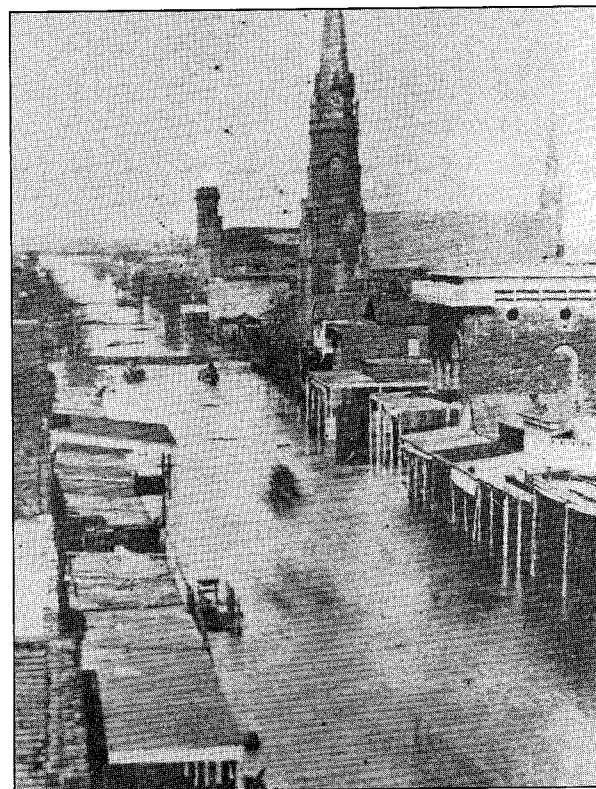
Marysville, which built the first of a succession of levees in 1868, became a walled city with the Yuba and Feather rivers flowing 20 feet above the level of its streets.

In 1873, a group of farmers filed suit against the Spring Valley Mine, asking for a permanent injunction against all mining activity and for \$2,000 in damages to a peach orchard eight miles downstream from the mine. The suit was not politically popular, since businesses in the valley depended on the miners as a market. The economic value of gold mining, compared with that of farming, led the court to deny the request for an injunction. As for damages, the jury found it impossible to allocate liability among the more than fifty mining companies dumping tailings into the same stream, only one of which was being sued. They would not require the Spring Valley Mine to pay. The miners had won the first legal battle.

If the courts would not let them sue the mining companies one at a time, the farmers reasoned, they would sue all of the mines dumping into one river. In 1876, James H. Keyes, whose house and 200 acres of farmland in the Bear River Valley had been buried beneath three feet of mud, asked for an injunction against nineteen mining, water and ditch companies operating on the Bear River. Recognizing that the suit threatened not just the named defendants but the industry as a whole, miners from throughout Northern California formed the Hydraulic Miners Association to consolidate forces and finances for the legal battle ahead.

The defendants immediately removed the suit to federal court, perhaps as a stalling tactic and perhaps to avoid appearing before Judge Phil Keyser, who owned a farm on the Yuba River that had been damaged by mining debris. If delay was the defendants' goal, they succeeded. Trial did not begin until two years later, when the U.S. Supreme Court declared the case was not a matter for the federal courts. But it was Judge Keyser who heard testimony about the damage inflicted by mining debris, and heard the miners reply that the economic benefits of their industry outweighed any alleged harm. In March of 1879, Judge Keyser issued a permanent injunction in the case of *Keyes v Little York Gold Washing & Water Co.* (1879) 53 C 724 preventing the miners from depositing debris into the Bear River or its tributaries.

The miners immediately appealed. The state supreme court invalidated Keyser's injunction in November on the grounds that joint liability on the part of the defendants depended on joint activity. Even if the activities



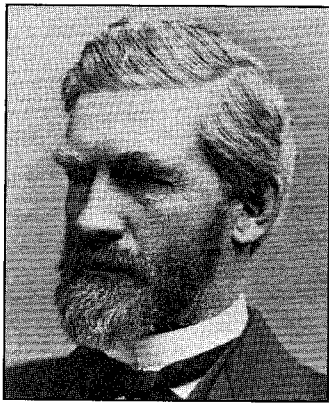
As the Yuba and Feather river bottoms silted-in with mining debris, floods inundated unfortunate valley cities like Marysville, shown here the day after Christmas 1867.
CHS, San Francisco

of each defendant contributed to the plaintiff's damages, the court said, they still were acting separately and so could not be sued as a group.

Taken together, the Spring Valley and Keyes cases were devastating to the farmers. First they were told they could not prove one mine was responsible for particular harm; then they were told they could not sue a group of mines jointly. During the Keyes trial they had formed their own organization to finance their activities—the Anti-Debris Association—and now they decided to take their complaints to the legislature.

The farmers did not expect the legislature to ban hydraulic mining, but they hoped to put some controls on the way debris was allowed to accumulate in the rivers. Toward that end, they lobbied for a compromise bill entitled "An Act to Promote Drainage." The bill called for a valley-wide system of debris dams and levees, an ambitious project to be financed by a statewide tax assessment. A recent engineering report had warned that the state's water was becoming unfit for irrigation, livestock, and human consumption. But the legislators' short trip from Sacramento to see for themselves the extensive flood damage in the surrounding valley was perhaps just as persuasive.

Passed in 1880, the Drainage Act was a progressive



Judge Lorenzo Sawyer, a Californian since 1850, authored the historic *Woodruff vs. North Bloomfield* decision. Cabinet photograph by Monroe & Potter—CHS, San Francisco

*Judge Matthew P. Deady, a jurist with Lorenzo Sawyer on many circuit court trials and a lifelong friend, sat on the *Woodruff v North Bloomfield* mining debris case and wrote a concurring opinion on the decision. Sawyer's letter to Deady, excerpted below, suggests the personal strain involved in writing the landmark decision.*

San Francisco Cal, Dec. 24, 1883

Hon. M.P. Deady,

Dear Judge:

I have at last got an opinion written in the great debris case, which I send for your examination, and criticism. Do not spare the criticism, for if it can't stand if from you now, it can't stand it from the able lawyers [intensive?] against it, after it has been fired off in Court.

My first criticism is, that it is unconscionably long—the longest by a long ways, that I have ever written. After I got well agoing I regretted that I undertook to write any at all. . . . But for the fact that such a display of industry, great labor, and great ability on the part of the attorneys on both sides has been made, I would simply have concurred in your opinion, and said not another word. . . .

If you find anything vicious in principle, non-judicial in tone, or defective in style or anything else that strikes you as out of the way don't fail to point it out. . . . I have given a very full preliminary statement of facts. If not very graphic in its descriptive qualities, it presents a case of wrong and injury that argues itself.

Please send it to me if compatible with a thorough examination by return mail, as the parties on both sides are becoming very impatient and I am anxious to fire it off, and get the matter out of my mind. I have had enough of it.

Make my regards to Mrs. Deady.

Sincerely yours,
Lorenzo Sawyer

piece of legislation with considerable subtlety, involving substantial cooperation between state and local government. For the first time, the state was seriously attempting to solve conflicts between interest groups within a region.

The Drainage Act compromise was short-lived, however. By the time the legislature gathered again in Sacramento in 1881, the debris fight had erupted anew. Regions unaffected by the mining controversy protested their payments to the project, and there were charges of excessive expenditures. Eventually, the legislation was challenged in court (*People v Parks* [1881] 58 C 624). The state supreme court declared the act invalid, arguing that management of mining debris was a private matter, not public, and that the legislature did not have the power to tax everyone in the state for the benefit of a few. A truce between farmers and miners was no longer possible.

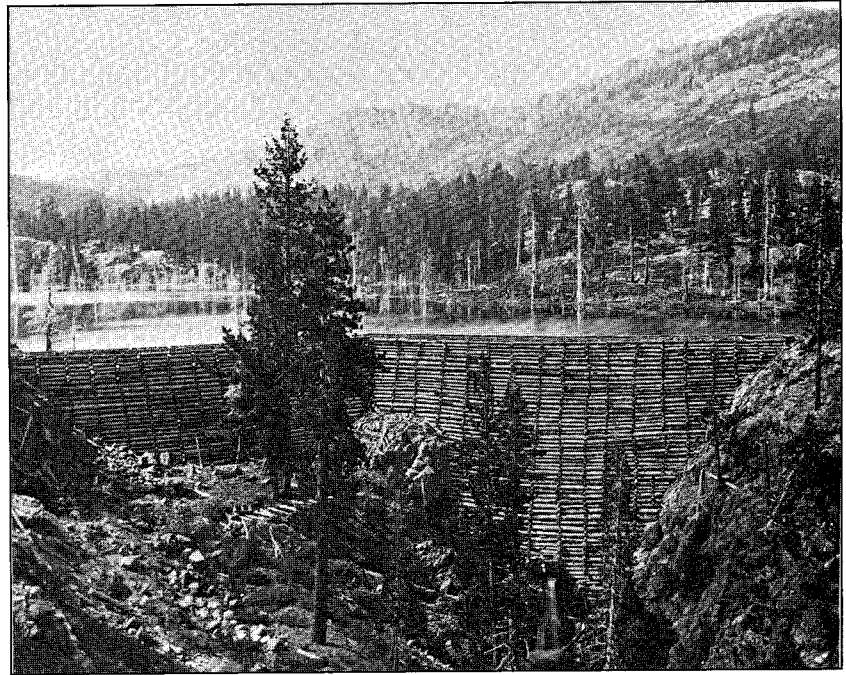
In September 1882 the Anti-Debris Association, through Marysville farmer Edward Woodruff, filed what was to be the crucial lawsuit in this long battle. The case was brought in federal court, free from the "misjoinder of parties" restrictions of the state court Keyes decision. Everyone knew that the critical issue in the case was the joint liability of the many mining companies named as defendants. In April 1883, Judge Sawyer decided that issue in favor of the plaintiffs:

[T]here is no misjoinder of defendants. . . . They all pour their mining debris into several streams, which they know must, by the force of currents be carried down into the main river where they commingle into an indistinguishable mass. . . . The final injury is a single one and all defendants cooperate in fact in producing it.

Sawyer added that, while certain parties were named, this lawsuit really involved two entire industries. The judge specifically took note of the legal war chests amassed by the two organizations that were the real parties in the case—the Anti-Debris Association and the Hydraulic Miners Association.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1883, as miners and farmers anxiously awaited a decision on the injunction request, special commissioners appointed by Judge Sawyer questioned 200 witnesses and compiled 20,000 pages of detailed testimony. Rumors rippled through the valley, from Marysville to Nevada City, that a decision was forthcoming—either the miners or the farmers

As miners tried and abandoned alternative techniques, the rivers began to run clear again.



would be assured preeminence in California's future.

Finally, on January 7, 1884, Sawyer read his decision. He took 3½ hours, much of the time spent detailing how the debris from the mines had injured the valley and its residents. Stating that he believed there was no feasible way to prevent the glacier of hydraulic mining debris from reaching the valley floor, he permanently enjoined the defendants from "discharging or dumping into the Yuba River . . . tailings, bowlders [sic], cobblestones, gravel, sand and clay debris or refuse matter."

Soon after telegraph wires had transmitted the news of Sawyer's monumental decision, a great celebration began. According to the local newspaper in Marysville, firecrackers exploded and "convivial spirits found the occasion an irresistible reason for seeking the flowing bowl." As for Sierra mining communities like Red Dog, Smartville, and Timbuctoo, small clusters of miners and shopkeepers mourned the "trenchant blows" they had received from "the granger press and the courts." One weary Dutch Flat resident concluded with sorrow, "Most of us will pack our gripsacks."

As large mining operations like North Bloomfield shut down, economic depression set in through the northern Sierra. Stores closed, sawmills and mining equipment companies laid off workers, and tax bases dropped—Nevada County's by \$1,700,000.

For a time water cannons manned by renegade miners could be heard, if not seen, blasting away hidden hillsides. In retaliation, the Anti-Debris Association sent spies into the mountains in May 1884 and found fourteen hydraulic mines operating illegally on the Bear River alone. The association doggedly filed additional suits against isolated operations continuing to send debris down the rivers. Eventually, even wildcatters working the Feather River in remote Plumas County were brought to their knees.

Valley farmers may have been responsible for the sudden and mysterious collapse of this North Bloomfield Company Dam on the Yuba River in 1883.

Photograph by C.E. Watkins, 1871—Bancroft Library

A petition to the legislature to permit hydraulic mining to begin again narrowly failed in 1887. In 1891, as a national recession threatened California, the legislature passed the Caminetti Act, which once again permitted hydraulicking, but only where miners could demonstrate that no debris would reach the valley floor. The expense of building effective debris dams, however, discouraged most would-be mine operators.

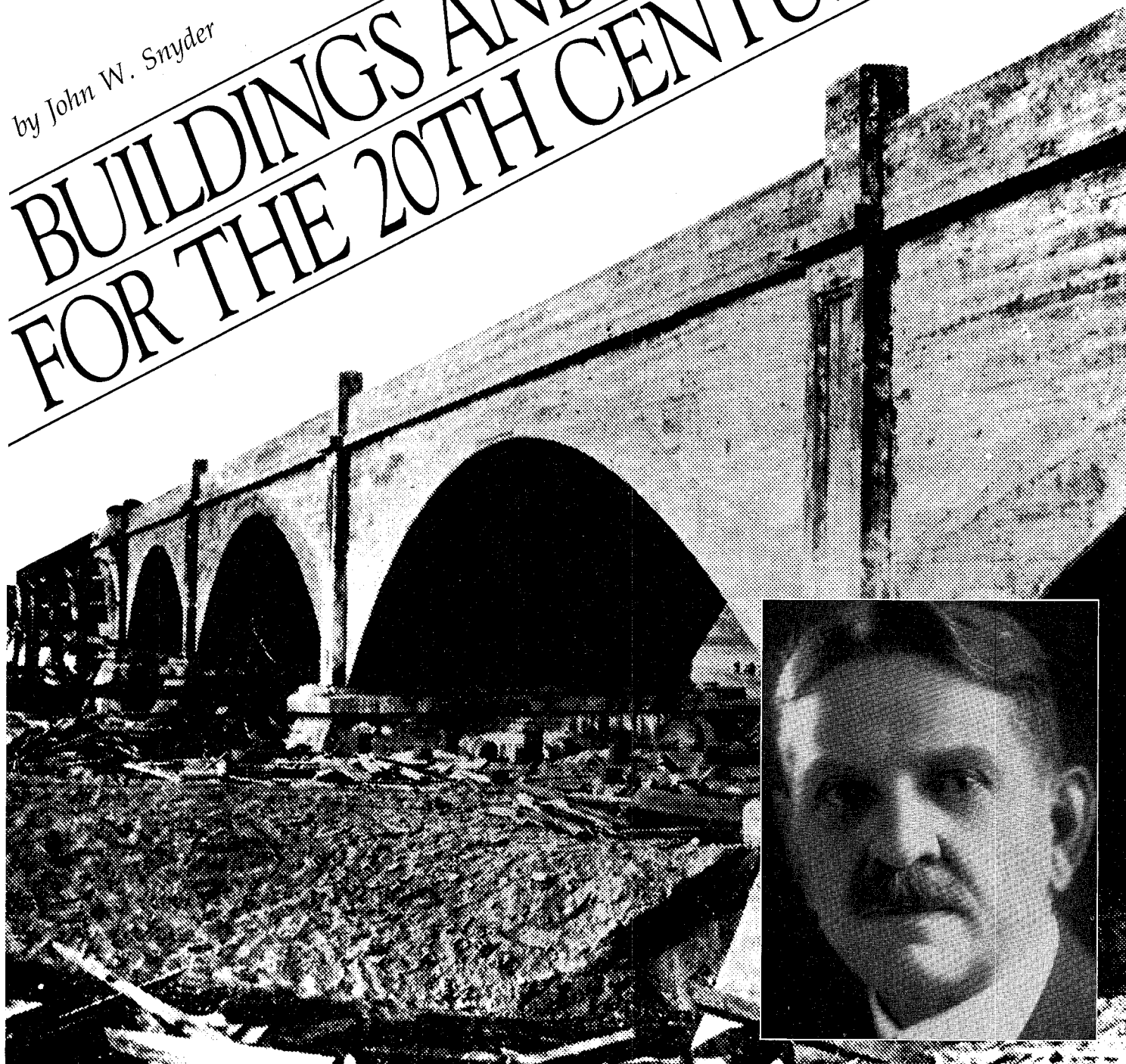
As the number of Sierra gold mines dwindled and miners tried and abandoned alternative mining techniques, the rivers began to run clear again. Debris encroachment in the Sacramento Valley continued until the turn of the century, as rains slowly cleansed the high mountain canyons of the remnants of hydraulic mining. As the Anti-Debris Association began to disband in the late 1890s, they could declare with confidence, "The great controversy is . . . over." □

Hydraulic mining sites look just as ravaged today as they did when water cannons blasted away the mountains north of Nevada City 100 years ago. The weathered buildings of North Bloomfield, a company town, and the scarred cliffs and multi-colored pinnacles of the colossal Malakoff Diggins—the Mother Lode's largest hydraulic mine—may be visited in the Malakoff Diggins State Historical Park. Keen eyes might also spot abandoned flumes, overgrown ditches and mounds of tailings throughout the once bustling Gold Country.

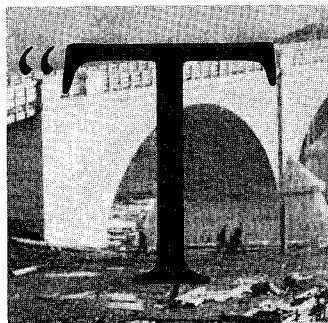
*Anyone wishing to learn more about this rich chapter in California history would enjoy reading Professor Robert L. Kelley's book, *Gold vs. Grain, The Mining Debris Controversy* (Arthur H. Clark Co., 1959).*

by John W. Snyder

BUILDINGS AND BRIDGES FOR THE 20TH CENTURY



Engineer John Leonard brings reinforced concrete technology to California



“T hough the Crossley Building has shrunk from sight, Jno. B. Leonard and Reinforced Concrete will be more in evidence than ever.”¹ These prophetic words, penned by Leonard shortly after the 1906 earthquake leveled much of San Francisco as well as the brick-and-mortar Crossley Building, reflect this remarkable engineer’s confidence in himself and in the future of the new building material. Yet, in 1906, California architecture and engineering had taken only the first faltering steps into the twentieth century; nineteenth-century building traditions still prevailed. Reinforced concrete technology, which in the United States had been first developed and practically applied in the San Francisco Bay Area, was misunderstood, mistrusted, and restricted in use, and it would require diligent, competent work to win acceptance for it as a practical, modern material. It would be necessary to learn more about the conglomerate made of gravel, pebbles, and cement, to develop a new engineering and building technology, and to overcome a multitude of legal restrictions. Throughout Leonard’s career, he welcomed the challenge and determined to succeed.

The youngest of three children, John Buck Leonard was born to Joseph C. and Martha Leonard in Union City, Michigan, in 1864. The elder Leonard, a native of Smyrna, New York, had made what was intended as a brief stop in Union City on his way to California in 1842, but upon meeting and marrying Martha Haynes in 1845, thoughts of the westward journey ended. During the ensuing years in Michigan, Joseph Leonard worked as a cobbler, served in the state senate, and engaged in farming, surveying, the land agent business, and local politics. His son John studied engineering at Michigan State University, Illinois University, and the University of Michigan.

For five decades civil engineer John Leonard (photograph c. 1928) advocated the use of reinforced concrete as a modern building material. Courtesy Nanita Hutton, Rossmoor

Leonard’s Pollasky Bridge near Fresno incorporated ten 75-foot spans, making it the longest reinforced concrete bridge in the United States in 1905–06.
Architect and Engineer, January 1906

In 1888 John completed the journey begun years earlier by his father. Joining others lured by Southern California’s real estate boom, John travelled to San Diego, and then to Los Angeles, where he gained a position in the municipal engineering department. In 1889 he moved north to San Francisco, the city which was to be his professional home for the rest of his life. This last move brought him into contact with key figures in the still-young field of reinforced concrete.²

Reinforced concrete, which today has far outdistanced all other materials used to construct buildings, bridges and highways, was barely beyond an experimental stage. Unreinforced, concrete was known to provide great compressive strength, or the ability to withstand crushing-type forces, but to lack tensile strength, or the ability to bear stretching or longitudinal stress without tearing apart. Beginning in 1849, French engineers began adding iron reinforcement to concrete, thereby to enhance its tensile strength. Important patents were awarded the French in 1855 and 1867, and the material received international attention at the Paris Exposition of 1855. Fierce competition for control of the new technology led German engineers in 1879 to buy rights to the French patents. Austria obtained similar rights the following year. German and Austrian engineers then developed these basic patents to a high degree. The American Thaddeus Hyatt carried out independent experiments with concrete in England, publishing his results in 1877.

In the United States, the first major use of reinforced concrete appears to have been the work of William E. Ward, who built a house of reinforced concrete in Port Chester, New York, in 1873–1876. Ward’s work, however, was somewhat of an anomaly in America. Most of the innovations that followed in this country occurred in California, a region often viewed by architectural historians as developmentally backward.³

Innovations in American reinforced concrete concentrated in San Francisco after 1875. Pioneer San Francisco engineer and contractor Peter H. Jackson, basing his work on that of Hyatt, designed sidewalks of the material as early as 1877. Beginning in 1880, *California Architect and Building Review* published numerous articles and editorials focusing on cements and concrete. Jackson tested reinforced concrete beams in sidewalks, floors, and walls, noting in 1885, “the invention may prove of great value.”

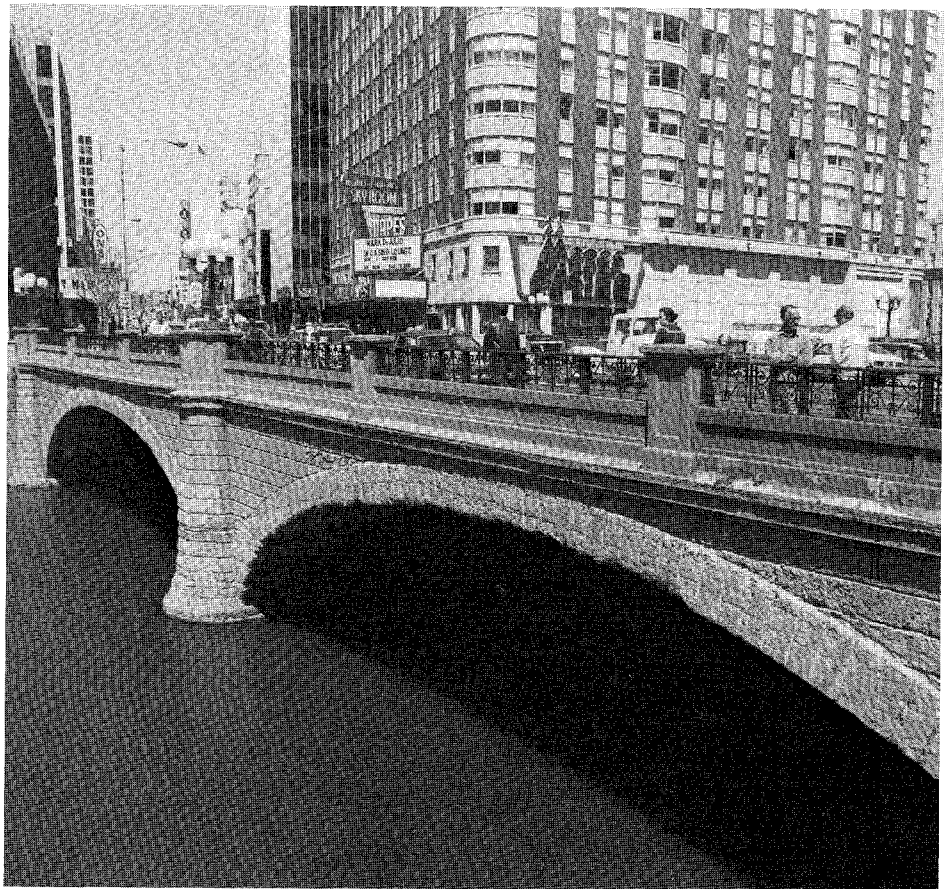
Jackson’s work notwithstanding, most of the impor-

Engineer Leonard's first bridge commission was the Truckee River Bridge in Reno, built in 1905 with Beaux Arts lighting and railing details.

John W. Snyder

(Facing) Los Angeles' Temple Auditorium, the largest reinforced concrete building in the world in 1905, represents a fruitful collaboration between architect Charles Whittlesey and engineer Leonard. Leonard's designs called for reinforced concrete trusses with a clear span of 110 feet.

CHS Title Insurance and Trust Collection, Los Angeles; California State Library, Sacramento



tant early reinforced concrete building work during these years was done by San Francisco engineer Ernest L. Ransome and architect George W. Percy. In 1884 Ransome patented concrete reinforced with cold-twisted square iron bars. The next year he incorporated a reinforced concrete roof in his design for the Arctic Oil Company warehouse in San Francisco. In the late 1880s he collaborated with Percy in a series of commissions employing reinforced concrete: the 1888 Bourn and Wise wine cellar in St. Helena (reinforced concrete flooring), the 1889 California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco (reinforced concrete flooring), and, most notably, the 1889 Leland Stanford Junior Museum and Roble Hall at Stanford University (reinforced concrete flooring, walls, and roof). In addition, by 1889 Ransome designed the Alvord Lake Bridge in Golden Gate Park, the first reinforced concrete bridge built in the United States. It was in this experimental environment that John Leonard embarked upon his own career.⁴

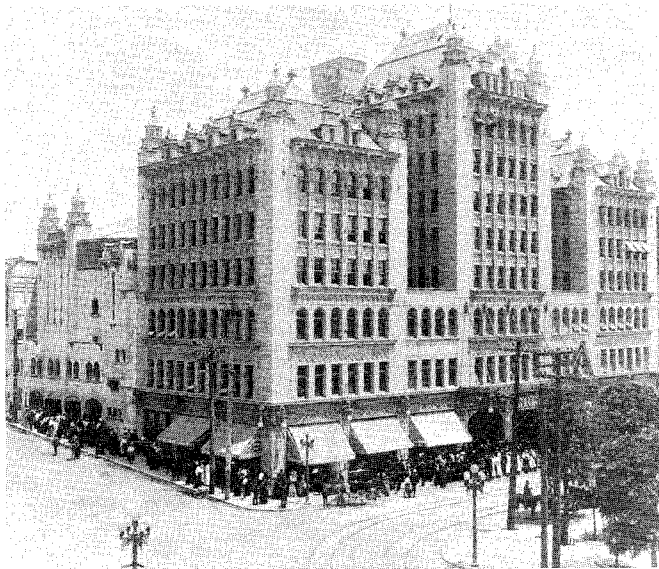
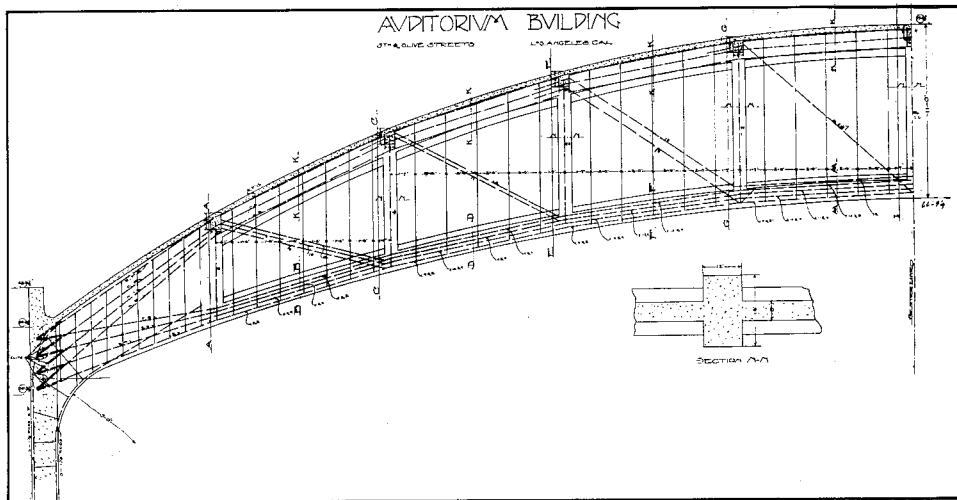
During 1889 and the early 1890s, Leonard worked for several San Francisco firms as a draughtsman and civil engineer. Among his first employers were the American Bridge and Building Company and the Bay

John Snyder, who holds an M.A. degree in art history from the University of California, Davis, is Chief Architectural Historian for the California Department of Transportation in Sacramento.

City Iron Works. In 1895 the Southern Pacific Railroad hired him as a draughtsman for their Maintenance-of-Way Department, and in that same year he presented a paper before the Technical Society of the Pacific Coast on the rebuilding of the company's train ferry slips at Benicia and Port Costa. As a member of the society, the young engineer found himself in excellent company. Fellow members Ernest Ransome and George Percy actively participated in society matters. Their experimentation with reinforced concrete design, as well as their enthusiasm for the new medium, undoubtedly influenced him.⁵

By 1897 Leonard had established his own business in concrete and artificial-stone contracting. During the next few years he achieved some measure of independent success, yet his timing was unfortunate. Ernest Ransome had left San Francisco for Chicago in the mid-1890s. His departure, coupled with George Percy's death in 1900, created a hiatus in the innovative use and promotion of reinforced concrete in California. Thus the years 1900 to 1903 found Leonard in the employ of Healy, Tibbetts and Company, a San Francisco engineering firm specializing in wharf, bridge, and railroad building. It was not until 1904 that Leonard again opened his own office, this time in the Crossley Building as a consulting civil engineer.⁶

One of Leonard's first independent contracts involved him with the Truckee-Carson Irrigation Project



at Hazen, Nevada, as consulting engineer for the San Francisco Construction Company. Although his exact role in the project remains undefined, it is noteworthy that the system included concrete dams and miles of concrete-lined ditches. In addition to providing him with sound experience, the Hazen contract led to Leonard's first bridge commission. His Truckee River Bridge, erected at Reno in 1905, was a two-span arch bridge originally carrying two traffic lanes, two sidewalks, and a center streetcar track. In keeping with the bridge's urban setting, Leonard chose Beaux-Arts detailing in the form of decorative railing and lighting elements.⁷

With the Truckee River commission behind him, Leonard set out to sell the idea of reinforced concrete bridges to county officials in California. Comparing concrete with steel, he argued that concrete's higher initial costs were balanced by reduced maintenance and increased useful life, that concrete did not require periodic painting or replacement of worn timber deck materials, and that, unlike steel, concrete's strength

increased with age as it cured and hardened. The persuasive engineer received three immediate commissions: the San Joaquin River Bridge at Pollasky near Fresno, the Dry Creek Bridge at Modesto, and the Stanislaus River Bridge at Ripon. The Pollasky Bridge (1905-06) incorporated ten 75-foot spans, and while individual span length was less than at Reno, the bridge's overall length made it the longest reinforced concrete bridge in the United States. At Dry Creek and Ripon, Leonard's designs were noteworthy for individual span lengths, 112 and 110 feet respectively.⁸

In 1905 Los Angeles architect Charles Whittlesey engaged Leonard to prepare the engineering design for his Temple Auditorium in Los Angeles. Of reinforced concrete throughout, the building rose nine stories, while the overall structure covered a large area, 165-by-175 feet. Leonard's careful calculations resulted in specifications for reinforced concrete girders as long as 42 feet in length, each carrying a concentrated load of 100 tons. These dimensions represented great strides in the use of this material and reflected the engineer's design skills and understanding of its properties. The auditorium itself measured 165 by 110 feet and seated 3,500 people, with allowance for an additional 1,500.

In order to provide the best possible sight lines, Leonard carried the balcony on huge reinforced concrete cantilevers, so that no supporting columns obstructed the view from seats below. To cover the auditorium Leonard designed a reinforced concrete roof carried on reinforced concrete trusses having a clear span of 110 feet. At the time of its completion, the Temple Auditorium was the largest all-reinforced concrete building in the world, and today's concrete buildings, which surpass 35 stories and cover entire blocks, have their technological roots in pioneer structures such as the Temple Auditorium.⁹

Not content with merely designing innovative buildings, Leonard also served from 1905 to 1912 as an associate editor for *Architect and Engineer of California*. From this position Leonard fielded editorials and articles

The 1906 Earthquake broke the hold of the powerful brick industry over California's building practices. (San Francisco's Ferry Building stands in the distance down brick rubble-lined Commercial Street.)
CHS, San Francisco

(Facing) Eager to study design and construction techniques, members of the newly formed Structural Association of San Francisco (Leonard third from left) observe earthquake ruins prior to revising the city's building ordinances.
Charles Derleth, Jr., Manuscripts, Bancroft Library, University of California

(Facing) Critics attacked architect Ralph W. Hart's Bekins Warehouse (1905), San Francisco's first reinforced concrete building, for violating existing building codes.
Architect and Engineer, October 1905

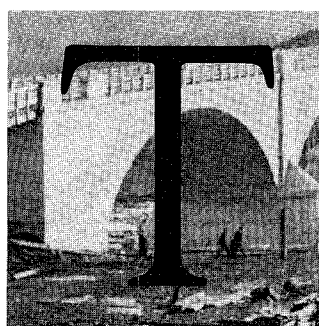
(Initial) Still in use, sturdy Fernbridge over the Eel River (1911) has withstood floods and dynamiting of debris. California Department of Transportation



which supported his proponenty of reinforced concrete and chided conservative officials who were skeptical of the medium. In an August 1905 article, Leonard attacked San Francisco's building ordinance as "anti-quoted" for not allowing reinforced concrete construction. He concluded: "The San Francisco authorities have made no move in this direction as yet. When will they? is the question asked by those most interested."¹⁰

Other professionals also challenged the West's slowness to recognize the merits of reinforced concrete. In October 1905, architect Ralph Warner Hart wrote about his design for the Bekins warehouse under construction, San Francisco's first reinforced concrete building. Admitting that the structure violated city codes, Hart labeled it ironic that the city did not recognize the new construction type which it had pioneered. Even conservative architect Octavius Morgan, who admitted his prejudice in favor of brick construction, grudgingly acknowledged that concrete was best suited for beams

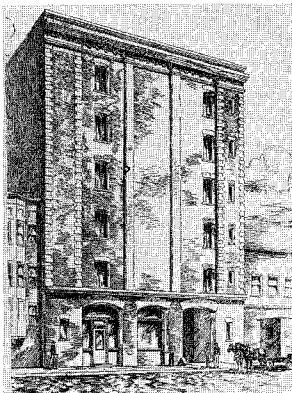
and girders and for heavy structures such as warehouses, bridges, and loft buildings.¹¹ Reinforced concrete was gaining its admirers.



and girders and for heavy structures such as warehouses, bridges, and loft buildings.¹¹ Reinforced concrete was gaining its admirers.

The city's disaster touched Leonard directly, claiming both his house and office. Yet while living in a tent

he year 1906 brought the watershed event in Leonard's career, as well as to the city of San Francisco. When the earthquake rumbled in the predawn hours of April 18, reinforced concrete was still a controversial medium in the minds of many engineers, architects, and building officials. By the time the fires were out and the evaluation of damage begun, a reassessment was underway.



near Fort Mason, Leonard looked to the future. In a letter to his sister in Los Angeles, Leonard indicated his determination to stay in the city despite the terrible conditions: "I am loth (sic) to leave for there is going to be plenty for me to do I think."¹²

The rubble that had been San Francisco, Santa Rosa, San Jose and Stanford belied the claims of the powerful brick industry which had successfully opposed the use of reinforced concrete. In the midst of the shattered brick buildings, the early Ransome-Percy reinforced concrete buildings and bridges stood firm, as did Hart's Bekins warehouse. Octavius Morgan, inspecting the ruins as the fires still burned, was forced to conclude that the monolithic qualities of reinforced concrete made it the most earthquake and fire-proof construction known. Poured as a cohesive unit, concrete did not crumble with the temblor as did brick; concrete's intact façades maintained fire protection for a building's interior spaces.

It became obvious to those in the building professions that the California disaster provided a unique opportu-

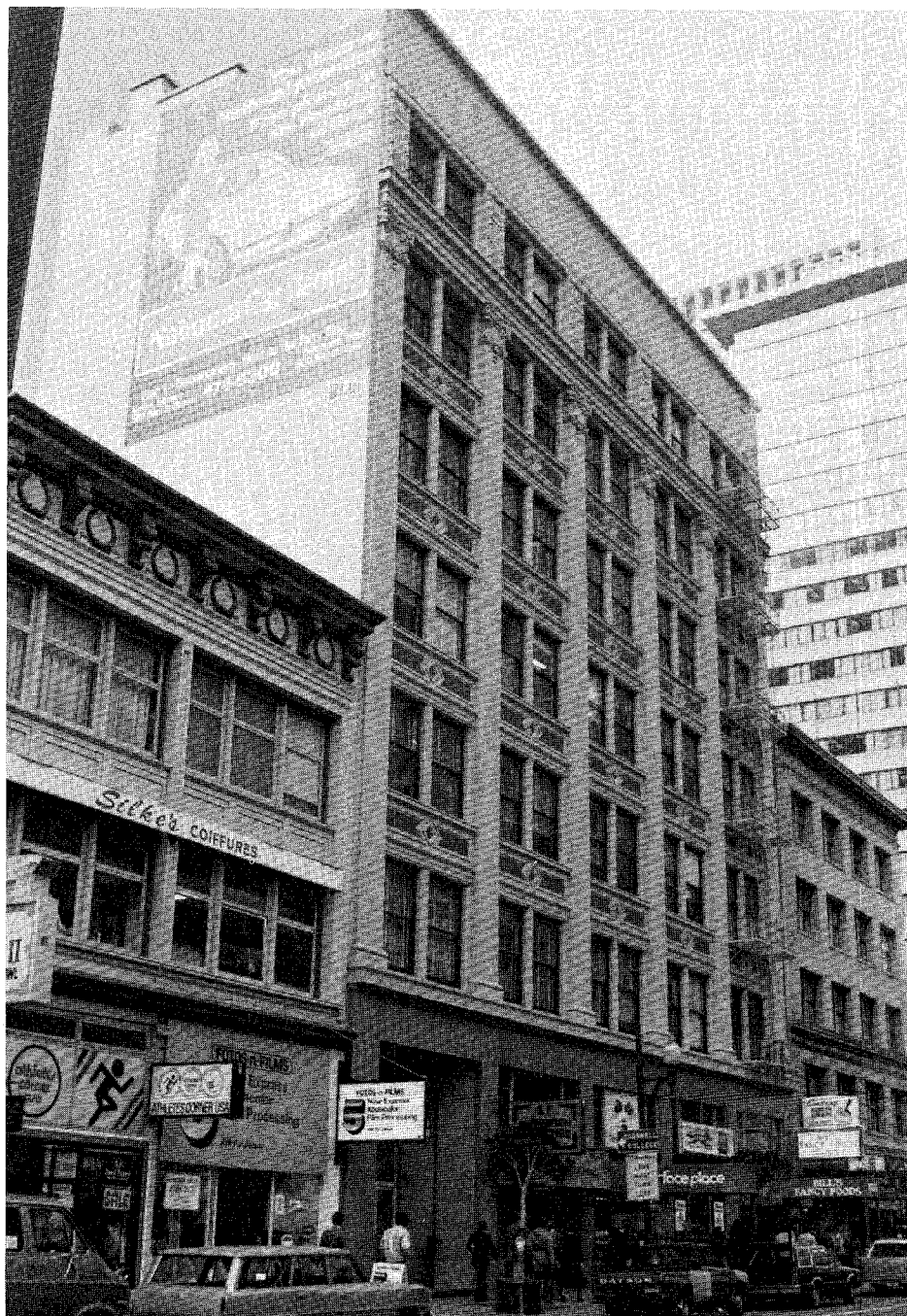
nity to study building design and construction techniques. Accordingly, Professor Charles Derleth, Jr., of the University of California contacted Leonard and other leading engineers to open discussions. On May 11, 1906, they published a notice in Bay Area newspapers calling a meeting of engineers to "intelligently observe and analyze the structural effects . . . (of) the recent earthquake and fire . . . for exchange of data . . . to lead to . . . a concert of opinion as to future practice." The group, 100 strong, met on May 17, 1906, to form the Structural Association of San Francisco.¹³

Membership soon expanded to include "all persons directly concerned in the design, manufacture, and use of structural and fire-resisting materials." Leonard, a member of the Executive Committee, headed the Subcommittee on Reinforced Concrete. Meeting weekly, the organization existed for six months. But by the time it disbanded in early 1907, a new San Francisco Building Ordinance, drawing upon the reports and work of Leonard's subcommittee, permitted reinforced concrete buildings. Leonard's continuing call for better building inspection had also motivated the San Francisco Grand Jury to request the appointment of nine more municipal inspectors.¹⁴

Outside San Francisco, Stanford University's Board of Trustees retained Leonard, along with engineer John D. Galloway and architect Henry A. Schulze, to inspect damage to the university and to recommend the best means of earthquake and fire-proof reconstruction. The Stanford advisory role marks Leonard's growing professional status, for the campus' engineering faculty was second within the state only to that of the University of California. On the Stanford campus, as in San Francisco, the committee found that reinforced concrete

Leonard's contractor erected the upper floors of the seven-story Mac-Donough Estate Building (1906) at the remarkable rate of one floor per week. John W. Snyder

(Facing) The ornamented exterior of Salinas' Ford and Sanborn Department Store (1907) demonstrates Leonard's advanced awareness of concrete's design potential. Monterey County Historical Society, Salinas

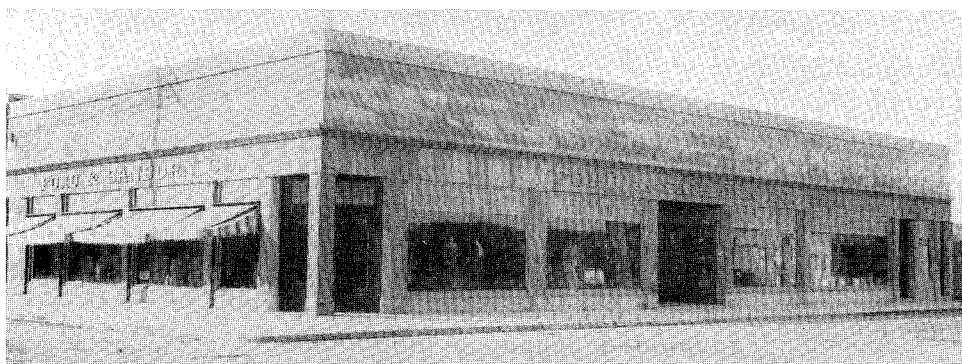


had withstood the temblor almost unscathed, while brick and stone masonry—notably the Memorial Arch and Chapel—had suffered greatly.¹⁵

In the face of evidence about reinforced concrete's apparent superiority as a building material, the brick industry continued vehemently to resist the use of concrete. Knowing that the industry's influence had effectively precluded the construction of reinforced concrete structures before the disaster, the brick industry claimed to have proof of the medium's failure. Finding this rhetoric without substance, Leonard responded through *Architect and Engineer* that an "antagonistic building ordinance" had been responsible for the lack

of reinforced concrete construction in San Francisco prior to the earthquake. He revealed that reinforced concrete floors and fireproofing had come through the disaster without instance of failure and warned that failure to use reinforced concrete construction would pave the way for a repetition of the disaster. His arguments prompted the *San Francisco Bulletin* to write of the brick lobby: "The time has come, however, when the city's need is stronger than the political influence of any special interest."¹⁶

Thrust into the architectural arena during the city's rebuilding, Leonard executed the engineering for Benjamin G. McDougall's Sheldon Building in 1906. Clad



in terra cotta, the building was one of San Francisco's first large reinforced concrete structures (architect McDougall was himself an important early user of reinforced concrete). In the same year Leonard also handled the engineering of the MacDonough Estate Building for architect William Curlett. Completed in less than six months, this seven-story structure attested to Leonard's claims of efficient construction. After finishing the first floor and mezzanine, the contractor was able to erect the building at the rate of one floor per week. By September 1907, Leonard had undertaken the reinforced concrete engineering for more than a score of San Francisco buildings.¹⁷

In Oakland, Leonard again teamed with McDougall in the design of the Hotel St. Mark. A nine-story building of eclectic style, the hotel provided the engineer with yet another chance to showcase reinforced concrete. Leonard chose flat-slab design with intra-column supporting beams to facilitate rapid construction. Careful placement of the reinforcing provided structural continuity. (This principle is the basis for modern reinforced concrete architecture, where small, light, repetitive, easily-formed elements join to provide great strength, while reducing labor and materials costs and speeding construction.) As in the MacDonough Estate Building, once construction reached the second floor it proceeded at the rate of one floor per week. Contractors completed all the concrete work in just ninety-eight days, including such details as a spiral stairway to the basement and a circular stairway to the orchestra balcony. *Engineering Record* hailed the building as combining "aesthetic appearance and excellence of design with stability of construction."¹⁸

In 1907 Leonard took his talents out of the Bay Area when the owners of the Ford and Sanborn Department Store in Salinas chose him to design a replacement for their earthquake-damaged store. Leonard retained Charles W. Dickey as consulting architect for the commission. The finished building's unornamented reinforced concrete exterior and unobstructed, spacious interior demonstrated Leonard's awareness of concrete's design potential. The planar surfaces, broken only by the broad—and similarly planar—display windows marked the building as ahead of its time, presaging the

International Style of architecture which was to blossom in Europe and America after World War I. With the design firmly credited to Leonard, Dickey's involvement remains speculative. It is possible that Leonard retained Dickey merely to avoid any complications with California's architectural licensing law.¹⁹

The post-earthquake years saw Leonard acknowledged as "the coast's foremost authority on reinforced concrete construction," and his employment of engineering graduates from the University of California reflected his influence within the profession. From this position of leadership, Leonard remained determined to solve problems of design and inspection which threatened to undermine the progress made to date in gaining acceptance for reinforced concrete. Investors' demands for reinforced concrete structures flooded the market, however, and many designers and contractors undertook work for which they had neither education nor experience. Thus the very period which should have seen the greatest progress in the acceptance of reinforced concrete instead witnessed a rash of structural failures which set development back several years. Poor design, lack of understanding of the material, lack of quality control, and lack of proper inspection were at fault.²⁰

Perhaps the most publicized failure in California occurred on November 9, 1906, when the Bixby Hotel at Long Beach, billed as one of the world's largest reinforced concrete buildings, partially collapsed during construction. A number of workers were killed, and the public outcry was intense. Teams of inspectors immediately arrived on the scene, and Leonard was among the first. After consulting plans, probing the wreckage, and interviewing survivors, he concluded that the building contractor had erred in the early removal of formwork, as well as in the placing of reinforcement and pouring of the concrete. These factors had produced a building lacking structural continuity, so that the weight of the wet concrete roof caused the fourth floor beneath to collapse through to the third floor which in turn failed. By the time the collapse had ended, some elements of the upper floors were found in the basement. Leonard's findings absolved architects Austin and Brown of any blame.²¹

In 1908 Leonard designed this reinforced concrete column for one of five bridges in Ross, Marin County.

John W. Snyder

(Facing) The Bixby Hotel at Long Beach (Austin and Brown, architects) partially collapsed during construction in 1906, setting back acceptance of the new building material.

Architect and Engineer, April 1906;
California State Library, Sacramento

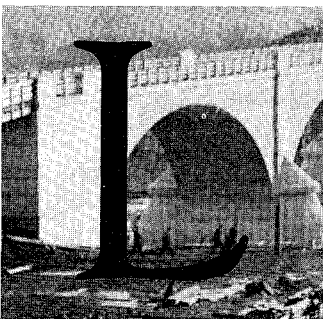
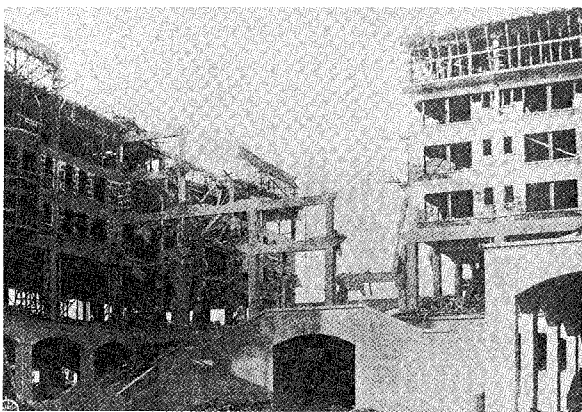
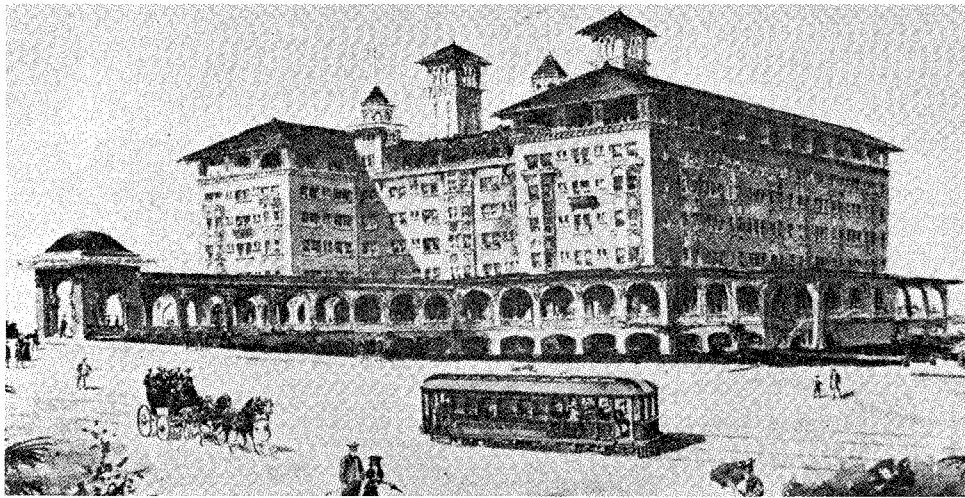


Predictably, spokesmen for the brick industry advanced their own opinions following the Bixby failure, finding that "experienced engineers and architects were carried off their feet by the tidal wave [of enthusiasm for reinforced concrete] and are today firm believers in the theory that something can be made out of nothing—that to insert a few iron bars that are not even tied or welded together in a concrete column or girder is a mysterious wonder." The industry thus attributed the cause of the collapse to a flaw in the material itself. However, a team composed of engineer T.E. Keough and architects Henry A. Schulze and William Koenig refuted this finding, designating this report for the Bricklayers and Masons International Union as an "attempt to deceive the public."²²

Failures like the Bixby Hotel led to calls for reform, causing Leonard and others to seek better inspection and closer relations between architects and engineers. Leonard's concern for adequate building inspection

was itself based on personal experience. Since 1905 he had been engaged as the engineer for the Western Inspection Bureau. Headquartered in San Francisco's Monadnock Building, the firm handled all types of structural tests and inspections and supplemented understaffed municipal inspection for at least three years (1905 to 1907). Leonard's inspector's role brought him into ever closer contact with the architectural profession, strengthening his belief in the importance of cooperation among architect, engineer, and contractor.²³

During this period, Leonard also brought his message to architects and audiences around the state. The Sacramento *Union* interviewed him in 1907 at the 15th Annual International Irrigation Congress, introducing him to its readers as "one of the best known authorities on the Pacific Coast in reinforced concrete." In 1908 Leonard carried the message of reinforced concrete to Portland, Oregon, and in 1910 he travelled east to New York City to deliver an address to the 7th Annual Convention of the National Association of Cement Users.²⁴



Leonard believed that reinforced concrete had diverse uses, and in late 1907 the engineer again returned to bridge design. He quickly undertook a number of commissions, designing a pair of bridges for San Luis Obispo completed in 1909, a group of five bridges in Ross, Marin County, in 1908, and another in nearby San Anselmo. He also designed the only steel bridge credited to him: the Gianella Bridge across the Sacramento River at Hamilton City, built 1908–1911. His initial proposal had called for a reinforced concrete structure, but when Butte and Glenn County supervisors rejected this design as too costly, Leonard fell back on his early training. That he sometimes failed to win converts to reinforced concrete is also evidenced in a stillborn proposal for a three-span bridge across the Feather River at Oroville, selected in 1907 and then rejected due to cost.²⁵

The year 1911 climaxed Leonard's early phase of bridge design. His Fernbridge crossed the Eel River south of Eureka with seven 200-foot spans. Monolithic abutments at each end of the structure aided it in with-

standing heavy winter runoff and the battering-ram effects of redwood logs washed down from upstream mills. Since its construction over seventy years ago, Fernbridge has met the river on its own terms. In 1955 and 1964, when the Eel and its tributaries destroyed many newer bridges upstream and obliterated entire towns, Fernbridge stood as if an extension of the bedrock itself. During the 1964 floods, the water level almost reached the deck, and a large jam of logs lodged against the upstream side of the structure. With the bridge vibrating from the current and from repeated blows of debris, workers resorted to dynamiting the jam. Fernbridge survived both debris and dynamite, continuing to carry traffic today.²⁶

Leonard completed a reinforced concrete railroad bridge in 1911 across the American River near Auburn for the Mountain Quarries Company. A relatively rare early use of the material in railroading, the bridge was designed to carry the largest locomotives of the day, as well as cars laden with limestone, and the bridge proved to be fully twenty percent cheaper than a steel structure designed for the same site. Conceived with permanence in mind, the bridge has been abandoned since the removal of rails during World War II, but it was pressed into emergency auto service in the 1950s and 1960s when floods washed out newer highway bridges upstream.²⁷

The year 1911 also saw civic officials in the Bay Area's exclusive Piedmont seeking an out-of-the-ordinary bridge. For the second time Leonard retained a consulting architect, Albert A. Farr from nearby Oakland. The collaborative effort resulted in a bridge far more architectural than any other Leonard designed, with Farr adding details to give the town a bridge in the popular Mission Revival style.²⁸

In 1913 Leonard and junior partner W.P. Day published *The Concrete Bridge*, which summarized all of Leonard's arguments for concrete bridges. The book stressed qualities which served to make a reinforced concrete bridge desirable. Aesthetically it offered "con-

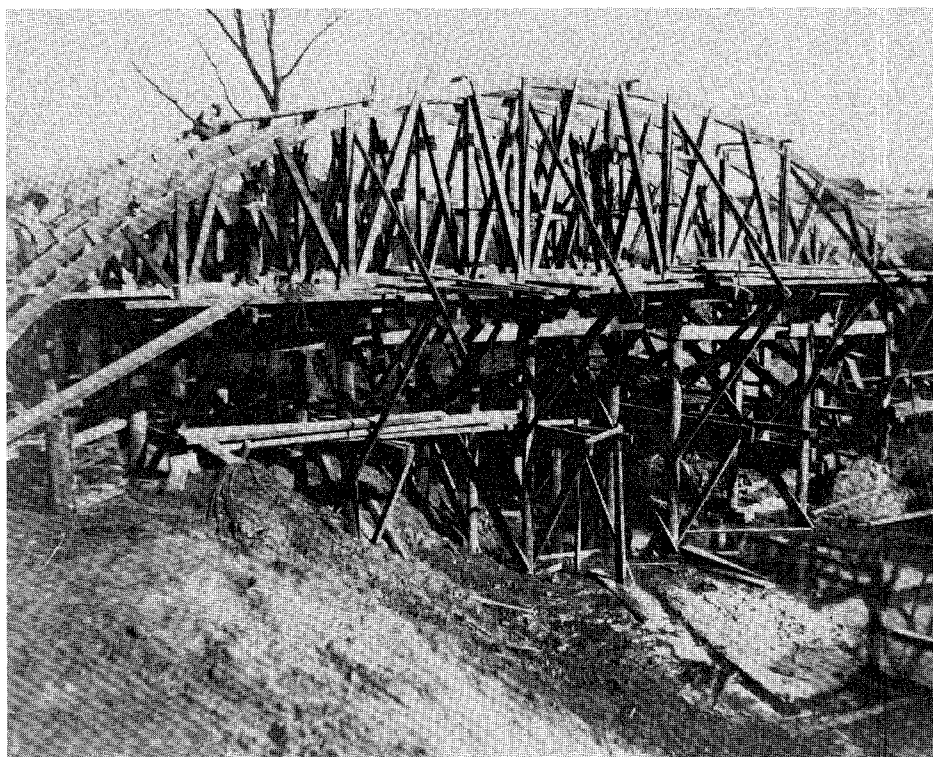
Concrete bridges required extensive and time-consuming false-work structures, such as this arch ring on Leonard's Dry Creek Bridge (1905-06) at Modesto.

A.L. Finney Collection, courtesy Marjorie Jensen, Gustine

(Facing) Twenty trucks drove Leonard's concrete test highway in Pittsburg at speeds of eight to twelve m.p.h. for the equivalent of eighty continuous days to measure the road's durability. California Department of Transportation

(Facing) Leonard completed a rare reinforced concrete railroad bridge (1911) across the American River near Auburn which was twenty percent lower in cost than a steel structure designed for the same site.

John W. Snyder



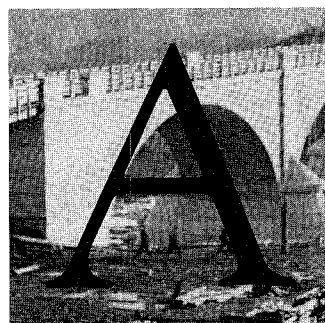
formity with environment . . . pleasing outline and appropriate use of ornament." Beautiful bridges, Leonard wrote, "are a sure indication of a progressive community." The book also stressed the use of California products, available through an expanding California cement and aggregates industry. (This in fact became a major factor in the choice of reinforced concrete for construction in California.) Profusely illustrated with photographs of Leonard's bridges in the tradition of a builder's catalog, the book represented a unique step for a consulting engineer and underscores Leonard's drive and salesmanship.²⁹

Experimentation in reinforced concrete bridge design continued into the second decade of the twentieth century, with Leonard among the innovators. Two accounts credit him with a bridge type he termed "canticrete." Utilizing a cantilever steel truss as the structural core of a concrete bridge, the design used less concrete, less reinforcing steel, and less labor-intensive falsework—the temporary wooden structure normally required to support a concrete bridge during construction. Leonard's idea was to lessen initial cost by reducing materials and labor costs, thus making the canticrete bridge a more saleable product.³⁰

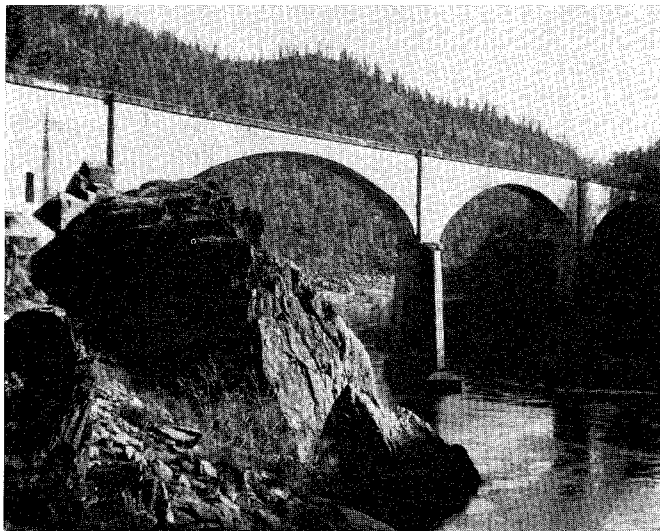
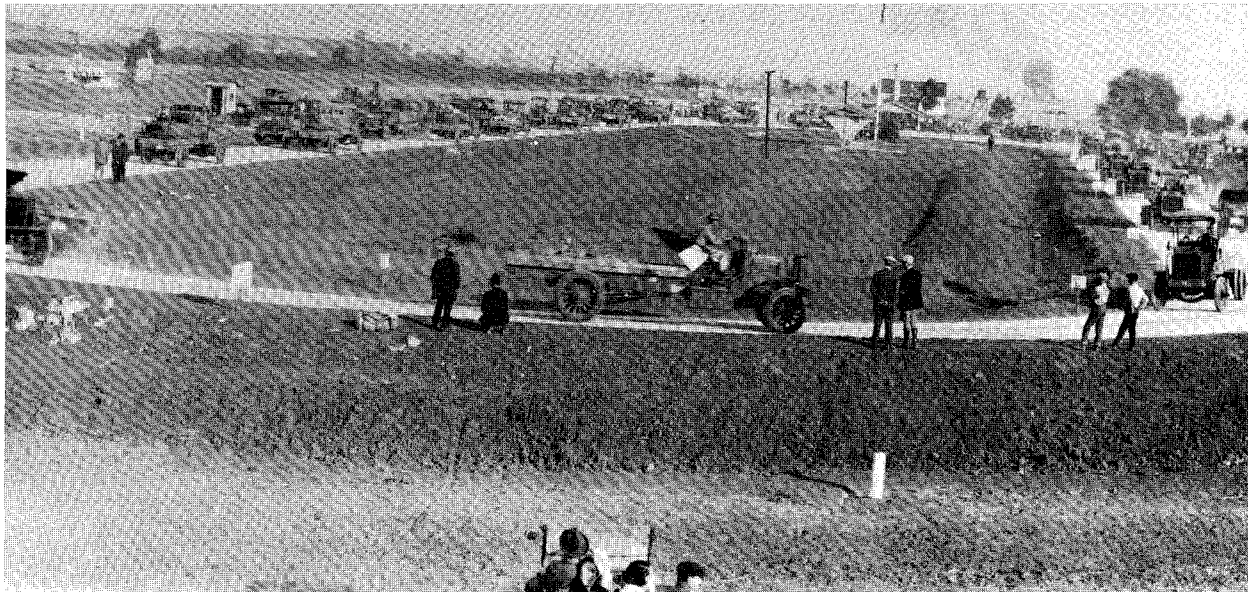
Leonard designed at least eleven canticrete bridges between 1914 and 1921, of which only three remain. Erected in 1914, the small Honcut Creek Bridge in Yuba County illustrated the extreme simplicity which could be achieved with the type. The Tuolumne River Bridge in Modesto, built in 1917 with San Francisco architect Fay Spangler and known locally as the "Lion Bridge," was one of the largest canticretes. The low number of

surviving examples of canticrete bridges reflects the inability of the type to be widened because of the trussed sidewalls. When traffic volume exceeded bridge capacity, the only choice was to replace the bridge.³¹

After 1921, Leonard returned to more conventional bridge designs, probably because labor and materials costs in connection with the truss substructure made canticrete in fact no less costly than any other reinforced concrete bridge. The experiment, however, reflects Leonard's acknowledgment of one of the initial drawbacks of concrete and represents an innovative transition in its development.



As Leonard's canticrete experiment ended, he undertook yet another project which was to have great impact on transportation in California. Aware of the tests in other states by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, Leonard approached W.E. Creed, president of Columbia Steel Company at Pittsburg, California, with the proposal to build a concrete test highway in order to study road problems peculiar to California. Believing his company could supply a special type of reinforcing steel for highway use, Creed agreed, placing the project in the hands of Leonard and Lloyd Aldrich. Creed's only instructions were to make the tests thorough and to collect all appropriate data. Prior to undertaking design and construction, Leonard surveyed state and fed-



eral highway engineers about the project. The resulting test road was a 1,371-foot oval, 18 feet wide, utilizing 13 sections of various types of concrete pavements. The only government involvement in the project was to supply forty war surplus trucks to test the course.

Leonard devised a careful plan to conduct the tests. Four tunnels under the track contained instrumentation designed by Leonard to record slab flexure. The entire surface of the highway was marked off into six-foot squares, numbered and lettered to allow precise charting of failures. For the test, drivers moved twenty trucks simultaneously in each direction under gradually increasing loads; speeds averaged 8 to 12 miles per hour, typical of highway truck traffic at the time. Ditches paralleling the road were flooded to study the effect of moisture on the adobe subgrade. Floodlights allowed the tests to continue after dark. By the time the experiments ended after two seasons in 1922, the trucks had rolled the equivalent of eighty continuous days, subjecting the highway to an accumulated load of 7.36

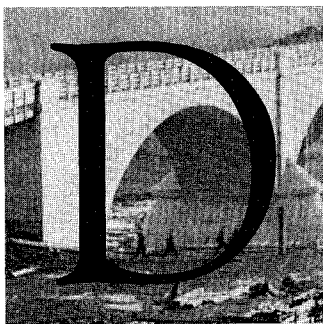
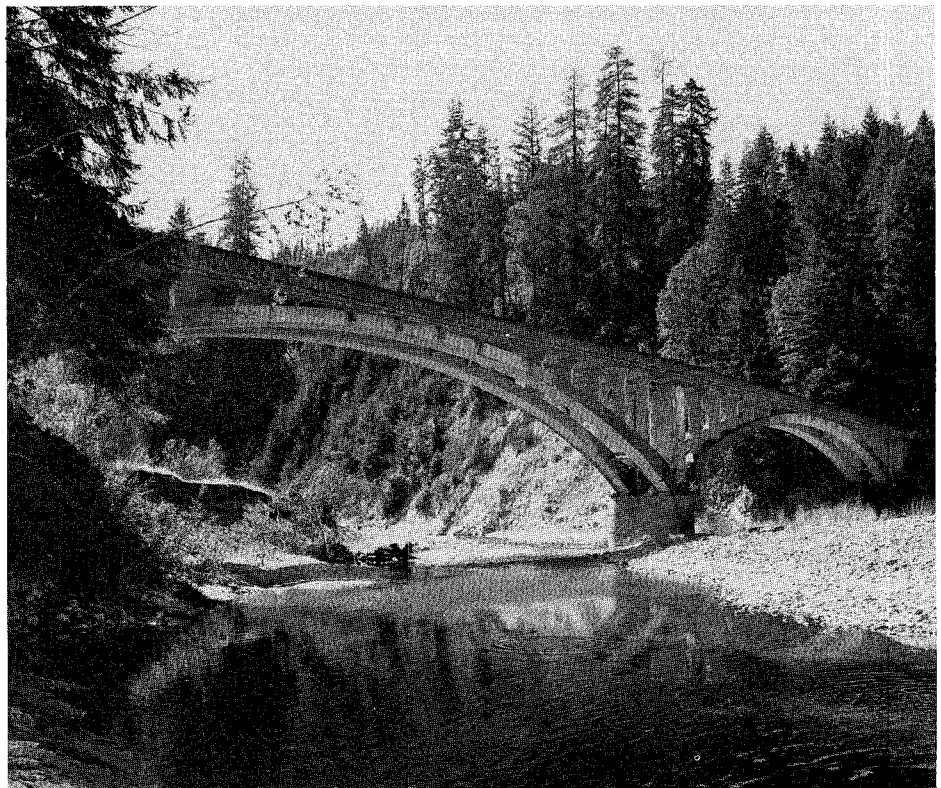
million tons. An exhaustive illustrated report provided the test results to the California Department of Public Works. The agency put the data to immediate use, and Leonard's project is credited with giving California's highway program its first great impetus. (By the 1960s, California was acknowledged as having the finest roadway system in the world.)³²

Between 1921 and 1926 Leonard prepared designs for at least nine bridges, six of which were built between 1922 and 1925, and was involved in a tenth. In 1921 he designed three-span bridges to cross the Russian River at Healdsburg and the American River at Chili Bar. Because of cost, only the Chili Bar Bridge was built. At this same time, Humboldt County officials began a project to improve the road between Fortuna and Red Bluff. With massive Fernbridge a daily reminder of Leonard's design abilities, they turned to him again for a series of five bridges in the rugged Van Duzen River canyon. The first two were built in 1922 at Upper and Lower Blue Slide. Traversing their setting gracefully, these bridges represent the maturity of Leonard's design aesthetics. The remaining bridges were built in 1925, the farthest east a single arch at Bridgeville replacing a covered bridge built in the 1880s. The other two, Upper and Lower Blackburn Grade Cutoffs, were unique among all of Leonard's designs for carrying the roadway between soaring arch ribs.

Leonard also participated in early proposals for a bridge across San Francisco Bay. His plan, unveiled during 1926 hearings, proposed a bridge linking Hunter's Point in San Francisco with Webster Street in Alameda. Six miles in length, double-decked, and combining steel truss main spans and reinforced concrete trestle approaches, his design was projected at \$35 million. Consideration of private ventures continued throughout the late 1920s, before the state ultimately built the Bay Bridge in 1934–1937.³³

Humboldt County's Van Duzen River Bridge (1922) at Upper Blue Slide represents the maturity of Leonard's design aesthetic.

Pete Asano, California Department of Transportation, for Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service



Despite the hectic design pace of these years, Leonard made time for other career ventures. In 1924 he returned to *Architect and Engineer* in his old editorial capacity, and he also began once more to revise the San Francisco Building Code.

In February 1928 San Francisco City Engineer M.M. O'Shaughnessy sent a letter to Mayor James Rolph recommending that Leonard be appointed the city's chief building inspector, and the mayor backed Leonard before the Board of Public Works on the grounds that the city needed a "first class engineer" to head the Building Inspection Department. On May 17, 1928, the Board appointed Leonard Chief Building Inspector (a title later changed to Superintendent of Building Inspection). Bringing his accumulated expertise and theories to the position until he retired in August 1934, Leonard revised the San Francisco Building Code, improved and expanded inspection services, and initiated a survey of dangerous structures.³⁴

During the years leading to his retirement, Leonard remained active in an advocacy role, continuing to support code and inspection improvements statewide. In 1928 he became involved in a movement to establish a California Uniform Building Code, and when a draft was ready in mid-1933, Leonard was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee on Building Code Revision. The following year he was appointed

Chairman of the Building Code Committee for the Structural Engineers' Association of Northern California, a post which he held until the code was adopted in 1937.³⁵

During the late 1930s Leonard continued to fill varied professional appointments and to advocate improved interprofessional relations. In 1935 and 1936, as President of the Structural Engineers' Association, he sought measures to bring cooperation between engineers, architects, and building officials to the benefit of the general building industry. In 1936 former partner W.P. Day designated him Chief of the Division of Roads-Bridges-Paving for the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island. Finally, probably a result of the wartime shortage of engineers, Leonard was asked to design buildings for an engineering firm in Alameda in 1942. This commission—at age 78—was his last.³⁶

John Buck Leonard died in San Francisco on February 16, 1945. His legacy includes a remarkable, and probably unparalleled, *oeuvre* of forty-eight known bridge ventures, as well as at least twenty-six buildings. His aesthetic precepts, set forth in *The Concrete Bridge* and other writings, had influenced state bridge design, while his engineering expertise had guided pivotal experiments for the test highway at Pittsburg. His was also a legacy of improved building codes and regulations, design principles, and interprofessional cooperation. John B. Leonard had led California from the conservative technology and casual standards of the nineteenth century to the innovative technology and codified relations of the twentieth. □

(See notes beginning on page 338.)

San Francisco, Aug 1st 1885-

Mrs Gasque



C. E. BLAKE, Sr.,



Patients will please be prompt in their engagements with Dr. Blake, as in failing to do so the time is lost, and it will also prevent other parties who wish to engage his services.

N. B.—Payment is due and required at the close of each sitting, unless previous arrangement is made to settle the bill at the completion of all operations.

DENTIST,

No. 920 Market Street, near the Baldwin Hotel.

1882		For Professional Services,		
Oct. 2	one filling	treatment of nose	\$ 4.00	
Nov 18	Extracting 2 teeth	with Gas	4.00	
1883				
Aug. 5	do 2 do		2.00	
"		Repairing Plate Mr Gasque	3.00	
"		Extracting 2 teeth .. do	2.00	
1884				
Mar 30	Repairing Plate	do	3.00	
"		Mr Gasque	\$ 18.00	
Mar. 13	3 Bone fillings		9.00	
"	2 fillings		6.00	
" 17	2 Gold fillings	Difficult	14.00	
" 26	2 fillings	do	7.00	
" 25		For Professional Services, one Gold filling	5.00	
	one filling		3.00	
	Cleansing teeth		5.00	
27	2 Gold fillings		10.00	
	one filling	Difficult	5.00	
Apr. 2	one Gold filling		5.00	
	Treatment & filling	ferny	5.00	
8	one Gold filling		5.00	
	2 Difficult fillings		8.00	
Aug. 12	one Gold filling		5.00	
1885				
June 27	Repairing Plate Mr Gasque		2.00	
	Extracting with Gas		2.00	
	one Case of Larinacina Biting		\$ 114.00	
	6 Boxes of Soap		6.00	
			\$ 123.00	
	Received Payment			
	in full to Mrs Blake			
		C. E. Blake, Jr.		

In the 1880s when dentists such as C.E. Blake of San Francisco practiced their craft, the new science of filling cavities with gold amalgam cost dearly at \$5 each, or \$7 for particularly difficult caries. In comparison, tooth extractions—with gas—cost a mere \$2, with alcoholic Damiana Bitters sold by the case to ease the pain. Times were different, and the generous Dentist Blake, whose bill for services is now in the CHS Library, extended credit to at least one patient for over 2½ years. Gift of Mrs. Louise Blake Shaw, Pacific Grove

The San Francisco Call.

VOLUME XXI—NO. 177.

SAN FRANCISCO, MONDAY, MAY 26, 1902.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

STATE RECORDS PRESENT PROOF THAT WARDEN M. G. AGUIRRE PURCHASED FEMALE APPAREL WITH PUBLIC FUNDS AND OBTAINED VAST SUPPLIES OF FOOD BY FORGERY AND FRAUD



IN FURTHER PROOF OF CHARGES

FURTHER proof is presented to-day by The Call to show that Warden Martin G. Aguirre of San Quentin prison certified to forged bills of accounts, prepared by convicts and foisted by the Warden and his associates upon the Board of Prison Directors, the Board of Examiners and the State Comptroller, thereby obtaining goods by fraud and other felonious acts.

The records at San Quentin prison have been falsified by convicts in order to cover up stealing of State supplies of foodstuffs by Warden Aguirre, which have been enjoyed by Governor Henry T. Gage and other bosom friends of the Warden.

As a sample of the vast amount of foodstuffs drawn by Aguirre from the commissary department of San Quentin prison, The Call publishes to-day a list of supplies drawn by Aguirre in March last and the cash values of the same. The items and figures were copied last week from the prison records. The documents at San Quentin show on their face notations to charge the bulk of the supplies to other accounts.

GENUINE BILL FOR WOMEN'S APPAREL AND FORGED DOCUMENT FOISTED BY AGUIRRE ON THE STATE.

WARDEN AGUIRRE in March last drew 81 dozen eggs from the State supplies and 80 rolls of butter, averaging two pounds to a roll, or 100 pounds of butter during the month. Aguirre is a single man and his household is very small. What has Aguirre, the bosom friend of Governor Gage, done with 81 dozen eggs and 100 pounds of butter drawn from the State supplies at San Quentin prison in one month?

Books of San Quentin Prison Show Falsification.

FURTHER proof of the gross frauds perpetrated by the ring of forgers that is in control of the finances of San Quentin Prison is presented to-day by The Call.

The exposure of the scandal that has developed at San Quentin Prison by the work of the convict bookkeepers, as a result of the investigation made by the Board of Prison Directors and the State Comptroller, has shown that the "bosom friends" of the Warden, who are in control of the finances of the prison, have been obtaining vast supplies of foodstuffs by fraud and other felonious acts.

Again The Call charges Aguirre and his intimates with having robbed the State and that Governor

The bill of goods rendered by Levi Strauss & Co. on April 11 of last year and charged to the San Quentin Prison account was as follows:

Five dozen napkins, at \$1.00 each, \$5.00
Two dozen towels, at 50 cents each, \$1.00
One dozen gowns, at \$1.00 each, \$1.00
Total, \$7.00

This bill was certified to as being correct by Commissioner Frank Foley, the purchase of the goods, however, being hidden up in the commissary stock book by the work of the convict bookkeepers. An item of \$2 for binding tape was added to the amount of the bill and entered up as a total of \$9.00.

The articles billed by Levi Strauss & Co. on April 11, 1901, were entered on the commissary books and charged to the Warden's house under the heading of "F and F," which means "furnishings and fixtures."

The bill for goods, including ladies' night gowns, was never sent in Sacramento to be audited by the Board of Examiners or the Comptroller.

Prepare Forged Bill.

Aguirre knew that these officials could never pass a bill that included "night gowns," so the blains and peas of convict bookkeepers were utilized in order that the wearing apparel might be paid for by the State.

To secure payment with public funds for the night gowns, deliberate forgery was committed by convicts, on the instructions of their guards, and a forged bill was prepared, certified to as being correct by Warden Aguirre and Commissioner Foley. The item for night gowns was changed to one of table cloths and the bogus document was foisted upon the Board of Prison Directors, the Board of Examiners and the State Comptroller.

With the certification of Aguirre and Foley upon it, the forged bill was duly ordered paid by State officials. When a check was sent to Levi Strauss & Co. in payment for certain accounts, Aguirre sent the bill for goods, including night gowns, to be received for by the firm.

The night gowns that were delivered to Warden Aguirre's house at San Quentin were paid for with money obtained by forgery and fraud and the records of the prison and at the Comptroller's office at Sacramento show the falsification of the bill of goods.

The manner in which the convict bookkeepers falsified the records of the commissary department and charged the overhauling of supplies by the Warden

was discovered by an investigation by representatives of The Call.

The entries on the day requisition book are first tabulated in pencil by the convicts on a set of sheets and the amounts carried out. These sheets show the amount of food supplies drawn by each department. Acting on the instructions, the convict bookkeepers, in copying the segregation sheets in, reduced the total charged against the Warden's house and increased other accounts.

Books Are Falsified.

A sample of this work was discovered by Call representatives last week in examining the records for March of this year. The rough segregation sheets and the commissary's monthly statement book showed that Aguirre had drawn food supplies in March amounting to \$307.13. The segregation sheets and the statement book disclosed that the prison mess was charged with food supplies amounting to \$183.21.

On the segregation sheet for the prison mess, the following notation was written in by a convict bookkeeper:

"Charge \$300 to prison mess and credit Warden's house."

On the segregation sheet for the prison mess the following notation appeared:

"Add \$300 from W. H."

The initials "W. H." represent "Warden's house."

When this evidence of fraud was pointed out to Commissioner Foley and his convict assistants, they hastened to explain that the whole matter was "an error." If committing such "errors" there are dozen of felons in San Quentin Prison to-day.

Felons Are Alarmed.

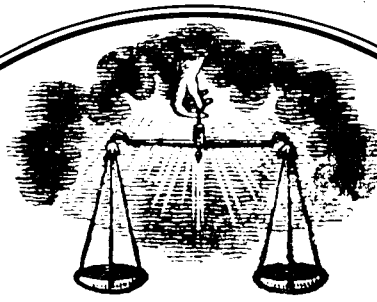
Less than eighteen hours after this evidence of fraud was discovered by Call representatives, the commissary's monthly statement was falsified. The item for "Warden's house for subsistence" was changed from \$307.13 to \$307.13, while the "prison mess" account was raised from \$183.21 to \$307.13.

Acting Warden J. A. Aguirre denied that any alteration had been made in the entries in the books and said that he knew nothing about the matter. He refused to send for Commissioner Foley or any of the convict bookkeepers to explain the falsification of the books. At the very time that Acting Warden J. A. Aguirre denied that the accounts had been tampered with, the pencil copy of

the segregation sheets for March, bearing the true amounts, was in his possession.

The books and records relating to San Quentin Prison disclose that Warden Aguirre, in entertaining Governor Gage and his friends, has drawn an enormous amount of food supplies from the State. What he actually drew and what he certified to is shown by the following table of figures:

MONTH.	Commissary's Report to Board of Prison Directors.	Warden's Report to Board of Prison Directors.
January	\$107.21	\$107.21
February	\$107.21	\$107.21
March	\$107.21	\$107.21
April	\$107.21	\$107.21
May	\$107.21	\$107.21
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THE CONTROVERSIAL CAREER OF MARTIN AGUIRRE

The rise and fall of a Chicano lawman

by Abraham Hoffman

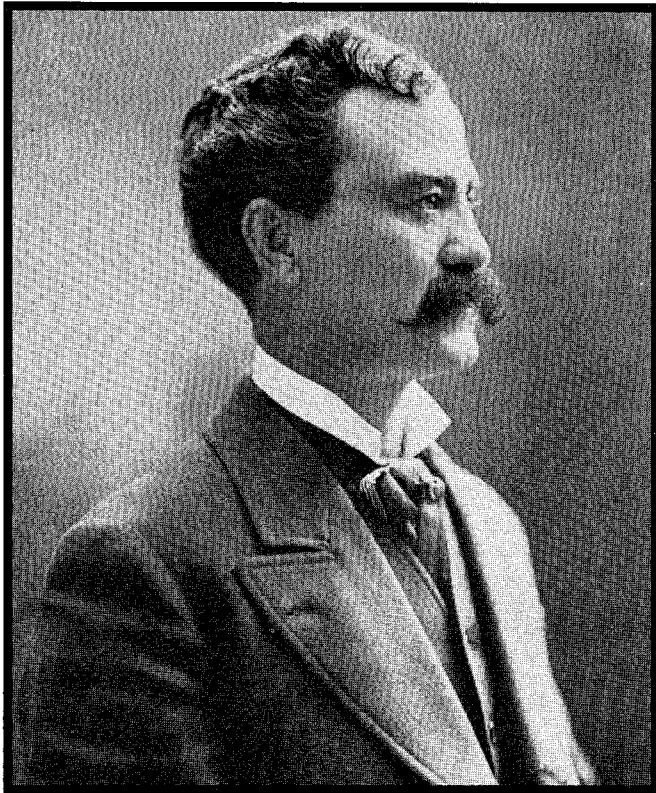
As a man who spent his entire adult life in law enforcement, Martin Aguirre is certainly unlike the better-known Mexican figures of the nineteenth century West who have been idolized for their resistance to Anglo rule. Historians have consistently characterized the latter part of this century as a time of social banditry and violence on the part of Chicanos outraged by the injustices perpetrated by Anglo-Americans in their takeover of the Southwest after 1848. While there is considerable evidence to support this view, it ignores the reality that some Chicanos devoted their careers to upholding the law.¹

In large part historians and popularizers of the western mystique have shown a greater preference for recording and glamorizing the careers of outlaws than those of lawmen. Just as is the case with famous Anglo outlaws and gunfighters such as Jesse James, the Younger and Dalton Brothers, and Wild Bill Hickok, more attention has been devoted to notorious Mexican outlaws such as Joaquin Murieta, Tiburcio Vasquez and Gregorio Cortez² than to law enforcers such as Martin Aguirre. Research into Aguirre's career in fact has been

almost nonexistent, aside from a highly anecdotal biographical sketch written over twenty years ago.³ This is a significant oversight.

Martin Aguirre, the son of a Spanish sea captain who travelled to California in 1840 to become a rancher, was born in 1858 in San Diego and raised in Los Angeles. When he was two his father died, and at age nine Martin was sent to live on the ranch of his relatives, the Wolfskills.⁴

A typical boy, Martin became a proficient swimmer and rider, but suffered an unfortunate accident as a child which left him blind in one eye—he was shot accidentally by his cousin with an arrow. While this disability would have disqualified him from a career in law enforcement today, it apparently never troubled him professionally in his time.⁵ When he was sixteen, an event occurred which might have influenced any young Chicano of his day—the notorious bandit Tiburcio Vasquez was executed, amidst tremendous fanfare publicizing his justification for his criminal life. Young Martin, however, apparently was not persuaded to follow in Vasquez's footsteps.



The youthful Martin Aguirre.
Portrait courtesy Mary Hagglund, Riverside;
CHS, Los Angeles

Aguirre's first job was picking oranges on the Wolfskill ranch, and because of his ability he was eventually promoted by his cousin, William, to the job of ranch foreman. Martin was not yet twenty-one. He soon began to develop an interest in local politics and law enforcement. Around 1885 he joined the Republican party and became a constable or deputy sheriff. These political and professional allegiances were to remain lifelong commitments.⁶

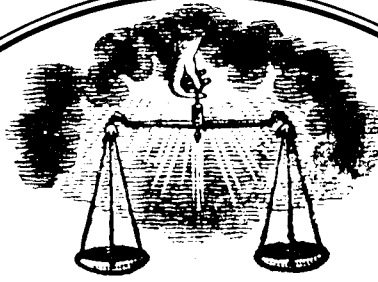
Aguirre first gained fame by performing an act so heroic and selfless that the suspicions of modern cynics would be understandably aroused were the incident not so well documented. In January of 1886, Los Angeles experienced one of those severe rainstorms which contrast so markedly to the region's generally semi-arid climate. Over seven inches of rain fell between January 12 and 21. The Los Angeles River, unrestrained at the time by its modern concrete strait jacket, eventually flooded and forced city residents from their homes. The river, resembling a "boiling yellow lake," according to one observer, swept away one bridge after another, leaving Boyle Heights isolated from downtown Los Angeles.⁷

Abraham Hoffman holds a Ph.D. in history from UCLA and is the author of two books and over forty articles on western topics. He is currently completing a book on the history of Mono Lake.

On the morning of January 19, with rain still falling, a horse-drawn, open-air streetcar attempted to cross the river in spite of obviously threatening conditions on the only remaining bridge at Downey Avenue. With the river cresting intermittently at fifteen feet, almost swamping the bridge, the streetcar slowly crept across. Suddenly, the pilings at the east end of the bridge collapsed. The frightened passengers immediately fled to safety, but the driver stayed with the streetcar and patiently urged his horse forward in the direction of the west end of the bridge, which was still standing. When this part of the bridge also collapsed, the streetcar was thrown into the raging currents. The horse in his panic managed to break his traces and swim to safety. The driver and one remaining passenger, however, were trapped on the wooden streetcar, which was now lodged precariously between the bridge pilings and a soap works factory at the river's edge. Meanwhile a crowd had gathered, including the mayor of Los Angeles, Edward Spence. The general mood was one of despair for the two stranded men.

At this point, Martin Aguirre arrived on horseback. People had been attempting unsuccessfully to throw a rope to the men. Aguirre, however, simply guided his horse El Capitan into the raging current and rescued first one and then the other of the men. "The rescued men were thoroughly drained and chilled," later reported the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, "but withal happy and thankful for their deliverance."⁸

Aguirre's act of heroism did not end there, however. He continued along the flood plain, bringing one person after another to safety. One home, belonging to an employee of the soap works factory named Whitney, was in imminent danger of being swept away in the flood when Aguirre arrived. Without hesitation Aguirre rode his horse through the swirling water to a window, and then ferried each of the man's children, one after the other, to safety. On his final trip he was just placing eight-year-old Theresa Whitney on his saddle when part of a nearby picket fence broke loose and knocked El Capitan over. Aguirre managed to place the little girl on the part of the fence still standing (cutting his hands on some barbed wire in the process) before his horse foundered again. With his foot caught in a stirrup, Aguirre was carried some distance downstream. By the time he managed to get back to where the little girl had been, she was gone. By the end of the day, he had rescued at least nineteen people, many of them women and children.⁹



“Martin Aguirre, the candidate for Sheriff, is brave, plucky, popular and experienced. He is a good detective and a regular sleuth-hound on the trail of a criminal or a fugitive from justice. Vote for him!”

Harris Newmark later mentioned the incident in his memoirs, calling it “an exhibition of great courage.” Newspaperman William A. Spalding lauded Aguirre as “the hero of the day.” On January 23, after the young deputy had rested from his ordeal, the town honored him in a celebration at which the county prosecutor, in grand hyperbole, acclaimed his heroism: “Descendant of Spanish cavaliers, moved by his high sense of duty to his fellow man and in keeping with the conscience of the mandates of that highest of all courts, plunged into the seething waters and rescued from watery graves helpless women and children. . . .” Presented with a valuable gold watch bearing the inscription, “Presented by the Bar Association of Los Angeles to Martin Aguirre, for Bravery in the Flood of 1886,” Aguirre humbly responded: “Gentlemen, I thank you. You have taken me by surprise. I am no speaker and therefore you will excuse me.”¹⁰ According to Harry Carr in *Los Angeles, City of Dreams*, in spite of all this acclaim, Aguirre was haunted until his death by the memory of the girl he failed to rescue.

By the 1880s, Los Angeles was undergoing a transformation from a violent little frontier town, with everyday shootings, stabbings, vigilante committees and lynchings, to the beginnings of a stable and respectable community. The arrival of the Santa Fe railroad and its subsequent competition with the Southern Pacific stimulated a real estate boom in mid-decade, and tens of thousands of newcomers began arriving, attracted by the area’s attractive climate, its inexpensive land, and its potential for agricultural and commercial development.¹¹

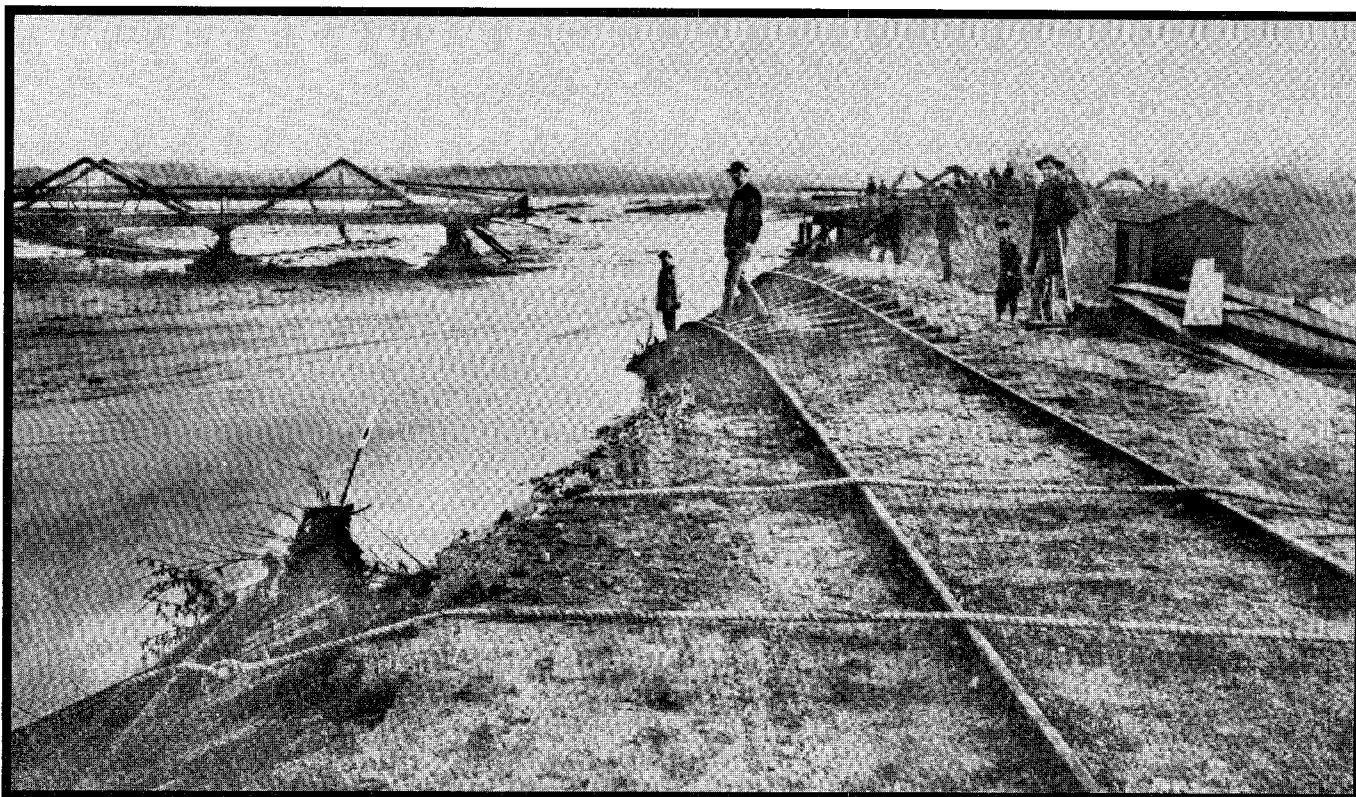
Amidst these profound changes in the very nature of Los Angeles, Aguirre repledged his loyalty to the Republican party in 1888 and announced his candidacy

for sheriff of Los Angeles County. Without hesitation the party placed this acknowledged hero on their ticket.

Aguirre found ready support on the Republican-oriented editorial pages of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Evening Express*. “Gallantry, nerve, good conduct and popular manners are appreciated by the voting populace and will win,” observed the *Times* in extolling Aguirre’s virtues. “Martin Aguirre, the candidate for Sheriff, is brave, plucky, popular and experienced. He is a good detective and a regular sleuth-hound on the trail of a criminal or a fugitive from justice. Vote for him!” The *Times* considered him “brave, faithful, and intelligent—three essential qualities which are not every day found in combination.” Aguirre, claimed the *Times*, “will do credit to the office to which he will undoubtedly be elected.” Aguirre was barely past his thirtieth birthday.¹²

The certainty of the *Times*’ prediction was borne out on election day as Aguirre defeated his nearest rival, Thomas Rowan, by almost 4,000 votes—14,490 to 10,519. Neither Aguirre’s Catholic religion nor his Spanish background seem to have hindered his campaign. Historian Leonard Pitt has observed that with the correct physical features, complexion, and old family ties, a Californio candidate could in fact be elected to office, as Aguirre was, through the 1880s, so long as the Californio vote exercised some influence. The year 1888 was generally one of great success for Republicans, as Benjamin Harrison defeated Grover Cleveland for the presidency and party candidates were elected to almost every county and legislative position in Los Angeles.¹³

As sheriff, Aguirre performed the necessary and routine tasks such as collecting fines, serving subpoenas, and making ar-



In 1886 the youthful and ambitious Martin Aguirre rescued nineteen people from the flooded Los Angeles River, performing acts of heroism that resulted in his candidacy for sheriff of Los Angeles County.
CHS, Los Angeles

rests for crimes ranging from embezzlement to murder. This was a formidable task in view of the fact that Los Angeles County, even with the separation of Orange County in 1889, covered four thousand square miles of territory. This was a sizeable area for a sheriff's office with only a dozen or so deputies to manage, yet Aguirre's office was noted for its integrity and emphasis on fairness. Complained one reporter for the *Express*, who was thwarted in his attempts to gain confidential information, "Sheriff Aguirre and his able deputies are about the hardest set of officials that the average reporter ever ran across for information. While they are very courteous to the newsgatherer, they have a happy faculty of keeping the secrets of the office to themselves, especially if they think that the ends of justice might perchance be thwarted."¹⁴

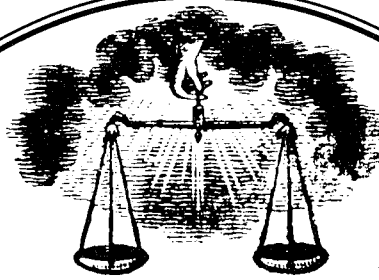
Aguirre was remembered in later years for never carrying a gun. According to his old friend Harry Carr, he preferred instead "a razor-sharp bowie-knife which hung from a scabbard under his armpit." Aguirre insisted, "The revolver is no good. I shoot at an escaped convict in a crowd, and I don't know where the bullets go." If Carr is to be believed, Aguirre "could throw a knife fifty feet and pin the spot on the ace of spades."¹⁵

Aguirre's well publicized predilection against guns on at least one occasion almost cost him his life. Six

months after becoming sheriff, a forty-five-year-old woman named Mary Simmons was raped by a French resident, Benoir Renault, and upon the advice of neighbors she filed charges. When Deputy Constable Dawes went to Renault's house on Wednesday afternoon, May 2, 1889, with a warrant for his arrest, Renault responded by firing several shots at Dawes and by barring the door. Dawes returned the fire and then telephoned the sheriff's office for help. Three deputies came to assist Dawes, and more shots were exchanged. Aguirre himself eventually came to the scene accompanied by two deputies and a fresh supply of ammunition.

After considering an entrance by the front door, Aguirre decided instead to go in by a rear entrance to this small house. When he had done so, he found himself in a room adjacent to the one in which Renault had barricaded himself. Aguirre called through a connecting door that he had a warrant for Renault's arrest, but Renault gave no response. He called again, but there was still no answer. Finally, Aguirre turned the knob on the door, but as he did so, Renault fired through it, wounding the sheriff on the left arm. By luck, a second shot was stopped by a half-dollar in Aguirre's vest pocket. Aguirre retreated, and while the deputies were bandaging his arm, Renault escaped from the house which had caught fire from the gunshots. He was caught the next day while hiding in a Bunker Hill coal bin.¹⁶

Aguirre's wound put him out of action for more than two weeks, and when he returned to duty, it was expected that Renault would be tried and convicted of



Aguirre took off his star, carried a white flag to the saloon where the man was drinking and bought him several beers before asking the man to accompany him to the grand jury rooms.

attempted murder. Renault engaged a prominent attorney, Horace Bell, to represent him. The trial opened on June 27 in superior court, and Aguirre and his deputies gave their account of the episode. Then Renault took the stand and insisted that no warrant had been read to him and, further, that Dawes had fired first. The trial took two days, and in his closing argument attorney Bell made the remarkable statement that Renault "ought to have killed" Aguirre, apparently on the justification that the defendant was protecting his home from intruders. Prosecutor C.C. Stephens lambasted Bell for his remark. "It would be bad enough coming from a criminal," he said, "but from a lawyer and citizen it is outrageous."¹⁷

Aguirre was naturally disappointed when the jury failed to reach an agreement on the charges after one man held out for acquittal. A new trial date was set, and on August 20 the entire drama was reenacted. The case went quickly to the jury, and Renault was found guilty not of attempted murder, but of simple assault, a verdict which aroused considerable criticism and anger. The *Express* commented, "It is a sad state of affairs when an officer is not protected by the law. Sheriff Aguirre's record as a peace officer is well established. He has often exposed his life and spent his own money to bring criminals to justice, and it is not surprising that the verdict in question has excited comment." Renault's attorney argued that his client was a mentally unstable person who believed he was being pursued by a secret society determined to slit his throat and bury him at sea. The judge ultimately fined Renault \$350 or 350 days in jail.

Aguirre responded to the verdict with a display of mordant humor. When the Grand Jury ordered him to bring in a man of bad reputation to testify as a witness in another case, Aguirre took off his star, carried a white flag to the saloon where the man was drinking, and bought him several beers before asking, as politely

as possible, if the man would accompany him to the Grand Jury rooms. The man replied he would go when he "got damned good and ready." After Aguirre reported this incident to the Grand Jury, it approved his use of more conventional methods.¹⁹

Despite the popularity which had won him his office, Aguirre was not free from criticism while sheriff. The reaction of the press was not favorable, understandably, when he arrested H.H. Boyce, editor of the *Los Angeles Tribune*, on a charge of blackmail, but as Aguirre pointed out, he was only doing his job.²⁰ Some criticized him for the fact that some of the inmates at the county jail suffered from serious illnesses, including one opium addict and one Chinese man with a "loathsome disease" who was a "horrible sight to behold." But Aguirre insisted he could do nothing about the situation as long as the county hospital refused to accept diseased prisoners.²¹ Regardless, overall opinion of his conduct in office was generally favorable, and as the next election neared, Aguirre announced his desire to be reelected. Unfortunately, a month before the election, he committed an untimely error in judgment, leaving himself open to criticism and giving county Democrats the opportunity to capitalize on his mistake.

Early in October 1890, Aguirre was contacted by Sheriff O.A. Bexley of Lee County, Texas, who had a warrant for the arrest of Nathan Willett on a charge of murder. Willett had lived in Norwalk, California, since 1872, and was considered by his community to be a family man and a law-abiding citizen. Nevertheless, Aguirre allowed Bexley to make the arrest and to speedily remove Willett from Aguirre's jurisdiction, but details later emerged which cast grave doubt on the validity of the charges. Outraged at what they believed to



Sheriff Aguirre, who never carried a gun, and a mere dozen deputies served some 4000 square miles of territory including the city of Los Angeles, shown here in 1889. (Note early street light above unpaved intersection.)

Bancroft Library

be underhanded and unfair treatment of Willett, Norwalk residents held a mass meeting to protest Aguirre's role in this apparent injustice. The Democrat-supported *Los Angeles Herald* had a field day denouncing Aguirre's action. "A sheriff who would do this is not fit for the place, and is a menace to the liberty of every citizen, for any man may be accused of crime," declared a *Herald* editorial. Another editorial argued, "Sheriff Aguirre has made the mistake of his life in the way he carried out this arrest . . . No man is safe while Aguirre is sheriff." Criticism became so intense that Aguirre felt compelled to take the unusual step of writing a letter to the *Herald* justifying his actions.²²

Sensing a chance for victory in a hotly partisan election, the Democrats kept up the pressure throughout October by questioning Aguirre's ability. Aguirre was criticized among other things for failing to apprehend several outlaws, for letting Renault's house burn down, for the Willett affair, and even for sloppy record-keeping. "In spite of the handsome Republican majority there is in this county, Aguirre will go into retirement at the end of this year," predicted the *Herald*.²³

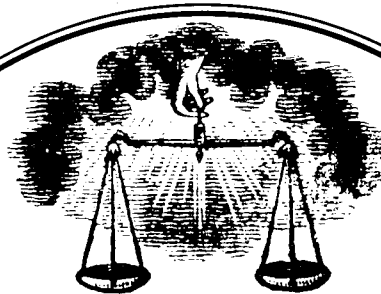
Both the *Times* and the *Express* earnestly defended their candidate for sheriff, and a Grand Jury report released in October found that Aguirre had conducted the affairs of his office in a proper manner.²⁴ Aguirre campaigned as best he could, but it was an uphill struggle

against the Democratic offensive. In the *Herald's* editorial endorsement of Ed. D. Gibson as Democratic candidate for sheriff, the paper stated, "We may be perfectly sure that in his administration of the office, no Willett episodes will occur."²⁵

On election day, November 5, Democrats and Republicans alike did their best to persuade voters to support their candidates. Money was openly given on both sides to purchase votes, but as the day went on it became apparent that even this incentive could not save the Aguirre candidacy. Although most Republican candidates were elected, Aguirre met defeat at the polls.²⁶

Aguirre did not take his defeat with bitterness. At the time the sheriff's office was a partisan one, and Democrats and Republicans went after each other tooth and nail in seeking county positions. It was not uncommon, therefore, for the sheriff's office to be filled by one person after another. When the reform-minded Progressives captured California in 1910, one of the movement's changes was to render county offices, such as sheriff, nonpartisan. As a result there have been but four Los Angeles County sheriffs in the past sixty-three years. Although Aguirre never ran for sheriff again, he continued his law enforcement career, serving as a deputy for many years under subsequent sheriffs.²⁷

Nine years after Aguirre lost the election, his continued support of the Republican party was rewarded when newly



Aguirre's continued support of the Republican party was rewarded when newly elected Governor Henry T. Gage offered him a choice political plum, the office of warden of San Quentin Prison.

elected Governor Henry T. Gage offered him a choice political plum, the office of warden of San Quentin State Prison. Gage, a native New Yorker who had arrived in Los Angeles at age twenty-two and became a successful lawyer for the Southern Pacific Railroad, is known as one of the governors of the period who owed his office to Southern Pacific railroad support. He married into a Californio family, and while living in Los Angeles had the opportunity to witness Aguirre's achievements. With more than a dozen years of law enforcement experience, no one questioned Aguirre's qualification for the job.²⁸

Aguirre's reputation as warden stands in marked contrast to the image of the young deputy who rescued women and children from the Los Angeles River. His defenders point out that as warden Aguirre stopped the smuggling of narcotics into the prison, permitted the playing of games such as baseball and handball, and provided shower baths. He also modernized the jute mill, introducing electrical machinery for the production of jute bags which were used as grain sacks by farmers. Indeed his popularity among inmates was attested to by the fact that they presented him with a teakwood chair carved from the salon staircase of the *Rio de Janeiro*, shipwrecked off San Francisco Bay in 1901. The convicts made a cribbage board out of the staircase scraps, which was also given to Aguirre.²⁹

There is, however, another less flattering view of Aguirre's term as warden. One history of San Quentin prison, for instance, describes Aguirre as "the most evil looking man who has ever served as warden of San Quentin . . . a swarthy man with a highwayman's mustache and only one good eye."³⁰

Ed Morrell, a convict sentenced to life imprisonment for robbery and a prior felony, had an unfavorable first impression of the new warden. One look at Aguirre, he wrote in 1924, and "I gave him his name instantly, the 'Pirate.' It stuck to him to the end of his bloody career at that prison. All in all he was the most ill-ap-

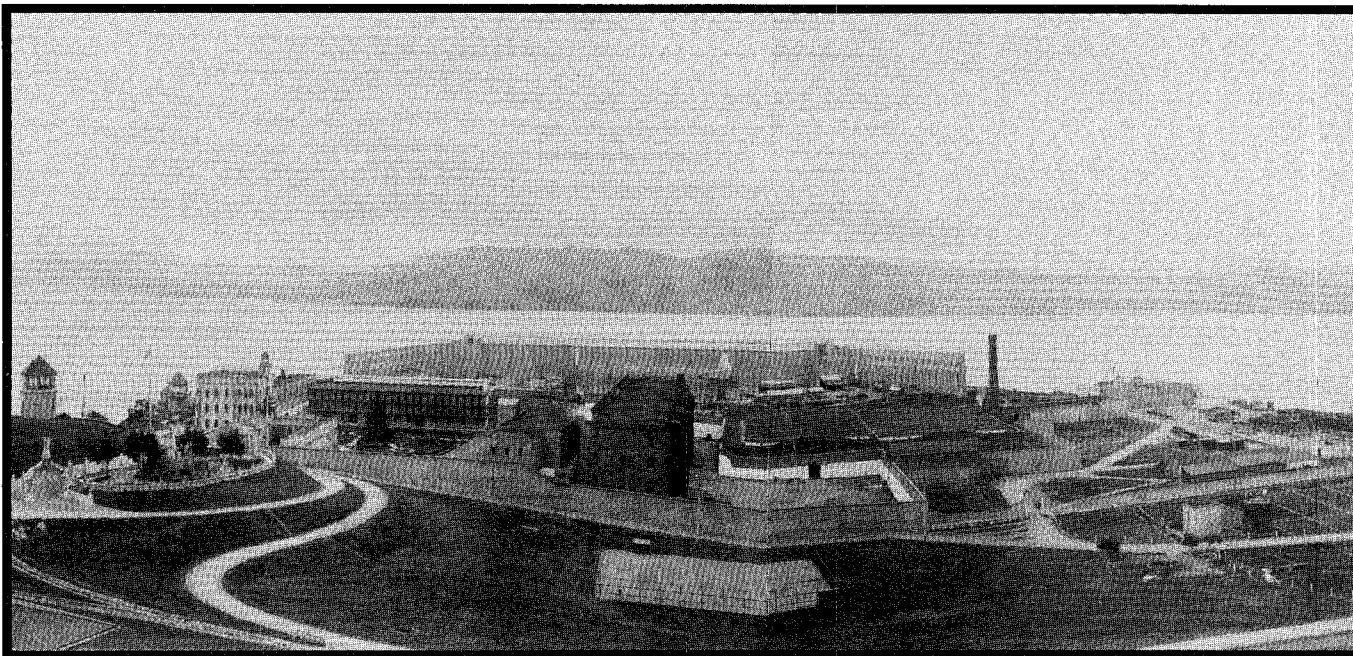
pearing man we ever had in San Quentin."³¹

To understand the contrast in images between Aguirre as sheriff and as warden, and the disparity between views regarding his San Quentin years, it is important to understand the conditions in San Quentin prison when Aguirre assumed the warden's duties on July 1, 1899.

Prison life can only be described as grim. The 1,200 inmates serving time in San Quentin for crimes ranging from burglary to murder were severely restricted in how they could occupy their time. Labor unions and manufacturers had successfully lobbied against the manufacture of convict-made furniture, stoves, shoes, and other manufactured items, and the search for an alternative way to have convicts generate income for the prisons without competing against private enterprise presented a continuing problem.³² The state expressed a general reluctance to provide adequate funding to prisons, with the consequence that guards were poorly paid, ill-trained, and often cruel. Punishments included extended periods of solitary confinement and use of the strait jacket as a restraining device.

Upon taking office, Aguirre immediately made some overdue improvements. He had two bath houses constructed for the prisoners, replaced a dilapidated guard post, and attempted to improve housing facilities for guards and their families. Aguirre also initiated athletic programs and contests, and for the first time in the prison's history he set up a program to see to the inmates' dental needs. Aware that a new century was about to begin, Aguirre called attention to the obsolete coal-oil lamps in the prison and the potential that existed to improve the prison's lighting system with electricity.³³

Aguirre noted that while discipline seemed good, too many prisoners had access to opium and morphine. Responding to this problem, he called in the entire prison staff and announced: "Gentlemen, that dope doesn't fly in here and it doesn't crawl in; the prisoners



When Aguirre assumed the wardenship of San Quentin in 1899, the grim, expanding facility housed more than 1200 inmates. Garden plots outside the walls (at right) probably supplemented the meals of the prison guards.

Bancroft Library

can't go outside to get it. You draw your own conclusions." Dope smuggling thus came to an abrupt end during Aguirre's tenure as warden. In appreciation of Aguirre's efforts, a committee of prisoners presented the warden with a certificate thanking him for his work in stopping the dope traffic and for his contributions to the overall health and welfare of the inmates. The committee claimed to represent more than 1,300 San Quentin prisoners. Even a convict who had "no use" for Aguirre conceded that the warden had succeeded where others had failed. "He's killed a few guys doin' it," noted the convict, "but there was no other way."³⁴

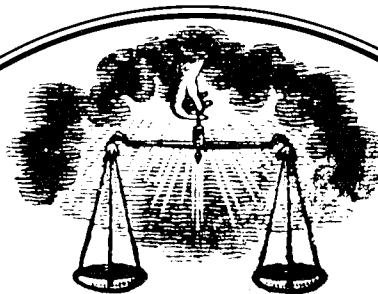
Unfortunately for the new warden, Aguirre soon found that prison walls could not keep out the politicking that plagued state government. Early in 1902 a reform group, the Republican Primary League of San Francisco, was formed under the leadership of Michael DeYoung and John D. Spreckels. Spreckels and W.S. Leake, publishers of the *San Francisco Call*, accused Governor Gage of corrupt practices in office, including receiving convict-made furniture and household items from San Quentin. The *Call* prominently displayed these accusations with banner headlines and oversize type. Gage responded by suing the *Call* for libel.³⁵

In Los Angeles, Republicans professed shock at the linking of Aguirre's name to the accusations of Gage's alleged corruption. The *Los Angeles Times* had no love for Gage,

opposing his renomination as governor, but the charges involving Aguirre and the convict furniture seemed unbelievable. Noted the *Times*, Aguirre "sprung from this community and is thoroughly well known by thousands of people. He never had, here in his home city, this reputation of being dishonest, and the *Times* is not yet prepared to believe that the *Call*'s charges against him personally can be true." The *Times* considered the possibility that a "ring" had been active in the prison without Aguirre's knowledge, "but that he consciously participated in the alleged peculations, we do not as yet feel warranted in believing."³⁶

The *Call*, on the other hand, exhibited no such hesitation. Its accusations that a 200-pound lounge chair, a box of glassware, a bike stand, a table, bird cages, and assorted crates and boxes had been sent from the prison to the Gage family "and their friends" was an alarming indictment of a public official's conduct. Even as preparations were being made for the libel trial, Aguirre transferred some prison guards and removed others, replacing them with (as the *Call* sarcastically observed) "trusted" employees.³⁷

On August 18, 1902, while the statewide Republican party met to decide on its slate of nominees for the November election, Gage's libel suit came to trial. Aguirre quickly found his own name dragged into the mud. Some of his actions which might have seemed appropriate at the time they were taken now appeared suspicious. For instance, Aguirre had put his brother, Joseph Aguirre, on the state payroll as deputy warden, along with one of the Wolfskill cousins and some other Los Angeles friends. Guards who had been unhappy with Aguirre's policies took their revenge, testifying to his poor administrative leadership. Aguirre was accused of slipshod accounting procedures, and it was



Defense attorneys easily established that San Quentin convicts had made a dozen dining room chairs, two easy chairs, a table, a couch, three or four chiffoniers, and other articles for Governor Gage and his relatives.

revealed that his sister-in-law had gone on shopping sprees with Mrs. Gage and charged household purchases to prison accounts.³⁸

The most damaging testimony against Aguirre (remembering that the trial involved Gage accusing Spreckels and Leake of libel) concerned the furniture. Defense attorneys easily established that San Quentin convicts had made for Gage and his relatives, at the very least, "a dozen dining room chairs, two easy chairs, a table, a couch, three or four chiffoniers, and other articles." Aguirre claimed he himself had paid for the furniture items, but he was forced to admit payment had been made after the *Call* had made its initial charges and that the sums were ridiculously small. The prison carpentry shop books were summoned, and the head carpenter stated he did not know where all the furniture had gone. The list of items grew to include desks and bedsteads, including one mahogany bedstead with the initial "G" carved on it. The hardware used in the making of the furniture—60 sets of casters, 276 locks, 220 drawer pulls, etc.—had been purchased with state money. Gage's antagonists repeatedly pointed out that the furniture had been made in contravention of state restrictions on prison-manufactured goods.³⁹

By the fifth day of the trial even Aguirre's supporters had become disillusioned. The *Times* sarcastically noted that Joseph Aguirre, who seemed "a most difficult and forgetful witness," admitted that Gage's family had often visited Warden Aguirre's home and pantry for lengthy periods of time, in effect living free at state expense. All of this proved costly to Gage, who at the very moment of the trial was fighting for his political life.

The contest ended on August 27. On that day the Republican party nominated Dr. George C. Pardee for governor. The libel trial, after a brief recess, continued for a short while but it was finally dismissed.⁴⁰

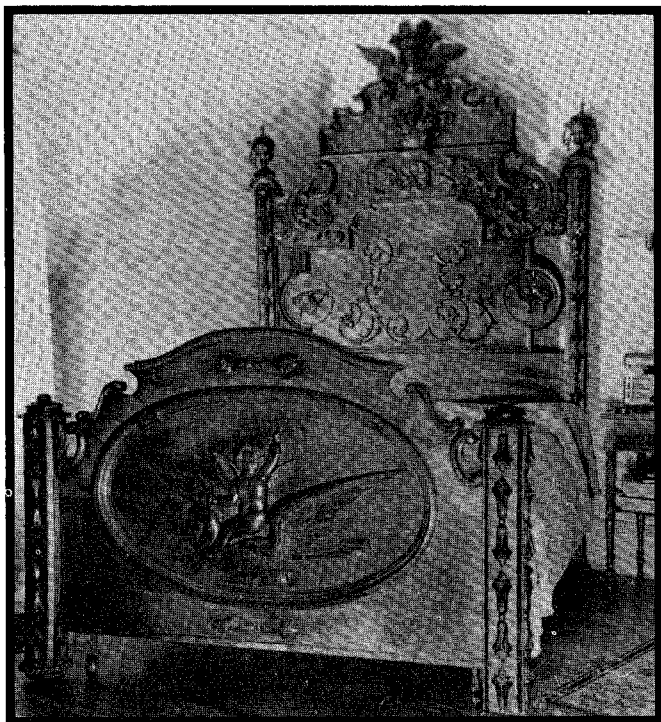
Seriously injured by the accusations made at the trial,

Aguirre managed to hold onto his position for the duration of the term. He knew, however, that his chances for reappointment were slight, even if the new governor was a Republican. Shortly before his term ended, Aguirre had a revenge of sorts. Aware that he had not had much support from his staff, Aguirre fired nine of them, including some with many years' service.⁴¹

While the furniture scandal had been an unfortunate episode, a second problem also marred Aguirre's term as warden. The California Prison Commission, a benevolent organization aiding ex-convicts, accused Aguirre of excessive cruelty, claiming he kept prisoners in strait jackets for periods in excess of twenty-four hours, crippling some convicts permanently in the process.

Though he was not the first warden to use the strait jacket as a form of punishment, Aguirre believed it an effective device not only to punish wrongdoing but to ferret out information. In fact he used it so extensively that new arrivals to the prison mistakenly thought Aguirre himself had invented the restraint.⁴² The State Board of Prison Directors eventually cautioned Aguirre not to cripple anyone else through use of the strait jacket and ordered him to restrict its use to no longer than six hours at a time.⁴³

A few convicts emerged from prison determined to awaken public concern for the need for prison reform. One inmate, Donald Lowrie, exposed not only Aguirre's use of the strait jacket, but also his practice of cutting rations and chaining prisoners to walls to extort information. Ed Morrell, another inmate, described his life under Aguirre and the warden's determination to locate hidden guns, on one occasion by placing him in a strait jacket. Morrell insisted the weapons were nonexistent. He called this device "the one-eyed Pirate's 'Overcoat,' " an "instrument of Hell" that "outrivaled even the horrors depicted by Poe in the 'Pit and the Pendulum.' " Morrell related how after only fifteen minutes in the jacket, pain shot through



Aguirre's name was linked to Governor Gage's when it was alleged that prison-made furniture like this bedstead found its way into the homes of Gage's family and friends.
 Courtesy Mary Haggland, Riverside

his arms from his fingers up to his shoulders, and how he felt like he was being choked to death. When he screamed, guards gagged him. He spent four days and fifteen hours in the strait jacket the first time Aguirre ordered it, and he wore it several times afterward. (In 1915 Jack London used the experiences of Ed Morrell as the framework for his novel *The Star Rover*, in which he depicted vicious Warden Atherton, a thinly disguised Aguirre, cruelly punishing prisoners in a vain search for the dynamite he believed had been smuggled into the prison.)⁴⁴

In all fairness Aguirre was probably no worse than other wardens of the era, and in some ways he was certainly better. He saw his job as one which required him to be fair but firm with hardened criminals. The political brush which tarred him as warden was embarrassing to him. One biographer noted that at the end of his term, "Aguirre gladly turned his steps southward again."⁴⁵

Before Aguirre left San Quentin, however, the inmates presented him with a token of their appreciation—a wooden box inlaid with mother-of-pearl, resembling a book. The interior of the box was lined with emerald green velvet. Two items were inside the box: a photograph of Aguirre set into the inside of the cover and a note which stated:

To Warden M.G. Aguirre.

Dear Sir,

We the undersigned members of the San Quentin Dramatic

Club and fellow prisoners, desirous [sic] of expressing our gratitude for the many favors extended to us, and to show our appreciation of the uniform kindness and justice extended to the men in your charge, take this opportunity of presenting this small token as a slight recognition thereof.

We know you will appreciate it far beyond its intrinsic value, as it was made from material purchased by ourselves and constructed during our leisure moments.

With the very best wishes for your future welfare and success we remain respectfully,

"The Boys"

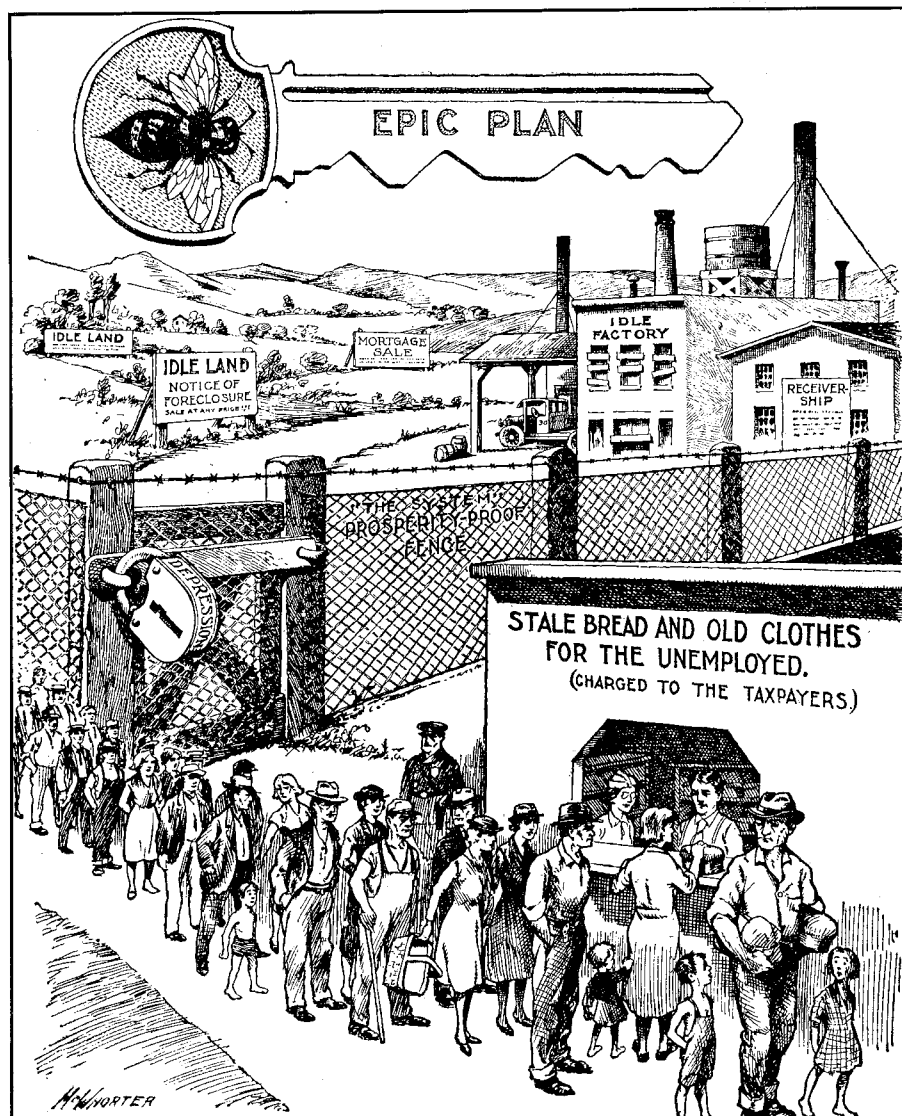
San Quentin—July 4, 1902

Appended to the note were the signatures and numbers of more than 950 inmates in addition to members of the San Quentin Dramatic Club.⁴⁶

After relinquishing his position, and following a brief visit to El Salvador where he supervised the construction of a penitentiary, Aguirre returned to Los Angeles where he spent the remainder of his career as a deputy sheriff and a court bailiff. At the end of his life, Aguirre was interviewed by a Los Angeles reporter, and at that time he recalled the simplicity of earlier times. "These automobiles and telephones and radios—what have they accomplished? These deputies go out. They telephone in every five minutes. When we went out no one even knew when we were coming back. These fellows get twenty feet off a highway and they're lost." Aguirre lamented the passing of mounted officers. "We didn't have flat tires, either," he noted. "We couldn't go 150 miles a day—but what have they accomplished with their autos [that we couldn't with horses]?"⁴⁷

When Aguirre died on February 25, 1929, the eulogies recalled his deeds of valor and made little reference to the San Quentin years. His career had spanned a half-century of California history. Aguirre had served as sheriff of Los Angeles County in the region's last days as a frontier town, and he lived to see the growth of major metropolitan areas replete with airplanes and traffic jams. Although his term as warden proved controversial, in the overall span of his career he earned respect for his bravery and dedication to law enforcement. In both the successes and failures of his career, he remained very much his own man. The one-eyed, knife-toting Californio sheriff who braved the flood of 1886 is still remembered with admiration.⁴⁸ □

(See notes beginning on page 339.)



UPTON SINCLAIR'S *EPIC* CAMPAIGN

For campaign veterans,
the 1934 gubernatorial race lives on

by Fay M. Blake and H. Morton Newman

At the beginning of the political campaign of 1934, it seemed likely that California would elect its first Democratic party governor in the twentieth century. Blame for the economic depression stifling the country had fallen heavily on the Republicans, including President Herbert Hoover who in 1932 lost not only his home state of California but his home county of Santa Clara to challenger Franklin Roosevelt.

In September 1933, complacent Democratic party candidates were shocked to learn that muckraking journalist Upton Sinclair—Socialist party candidate for Congress in 1920, for U.S. Senate in 1922, and for governor in 1926 and 1930—would run for governor as a Democrat.

Sinclair (1878–1968) had first made his name in 1906 when he published *The Jungle*, a graphic revelation of the intolerable conditions of immigrants working in the Chicago meatpacking industry. He continued writing, and with his sizeable royalties formed a utopian cooperative, the Helicon Home Colony, at Englewood, New Jersey. In 1915, he moved to Pasadena.

By the time of the 1934 campaign, Sinclair had written some fifty books and tracts criticizing the shortcomings of capitalism. His targets ranged from the coal industry and newspapers to higher education and organized religion.

It came as no surprise, then, when Sinclair initiated his campaign for governor by writing a utopian novel, *I, Governor of California*, and *How I Ended Poverty: A True Story of the Future* (1933). The lively fictional account of California from 1933 to 1938 told how Sinclair intended to put the state's unemployed to work in state-aided cooperative enterprises. *End Poverty*

Sinclair's EPIC Plan—symbolized by the “I Produce, I Defend” bee logo—promised to open up idled farms and factories. Cartoon by McWhorter, *EPIC News*, June 4, 1934

[Sinclair's tennis partner] said he first became suspicious of Socialism when he learned that Sinclair regarded the back baselines [of the tennis court] as flexible.

erty In California, or EPIC, became Sinclair's campaign promise.

In August 1934 Sinclair defeated seven other candidates to win the Democratic nomination, receiving the highest vote a Democratic candidate for governor had ever received in a California primary. More than two-thirds of his vote came from Southern California, over half from Los Angeles where economic dislocations were particularly severe.

In the Republican primary, the conservative governor Frank Merriam outdistanced his three relatively progressive opponents. This frightened moderate Republicans. They mounted an intense, multi-pronged battle to defeat Sinclair which, some historians assert, ushered in the modern era of campaigning. (The young duo of Clem

Fay M. Blake has an M.S. in Library Science from the University of Southern California and a Ph.D. in literature from UCLA. Her dissertation, *The Strike in the American Novel*, was published by Scarecrow Press in 1972. From 1971 to 1983 she taught at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

H. Morton Newman participated in the successful recall of Los Angeles Mayor Frank Shaw and the election of Mayor Fletcher Bowron in 1938. Newman's political experiences include years as a Communist Party organizer in California and Oregon and, more recently, activity in a variety of peace and environmental organizations. He was recently convenor of the Berkeley Gray Panthers, a national organization of seniors.

Newman and Blake's *Verbis Non Factis*, a reference book on political campaign slogans, was published in 1984 by Scarecrow Press.

Whitaker and Leone Baxter managed the Republican's anti-Sinclair offensive.)

Merriam, finally heeding his party advisors, made a strong bid to pick up wavering Democratic votes by declaring himself in sympathy with President Roosevelt's policies. Merriam even gained the support of another popular critic, Dr. Francis E. Townsend, whose *Old Age Revolving Pensions* plan Sinclair had criticized as "a mere money scheme."

In November 1934, Merriam won the election with almost fifty percent of the vote to Sinclair's thirty-seven percent. Raymond L. Haight, a Los Angeles Republican lawyer who had captured the nominations of the Commonwealth and Progressive parties, pulled in another thirteen percent. Sinclair's popular groundswell had been quashed.

Fifty years after Sinclair's defeat, Mort Newman and Fay Blake invited several dozen participants in the campaign for or against Sinclair to write or talk with them about how it influenced their political or philosophical development. Their contacts included a former University of California chancellor, a YMCA official, a Communist party organizer, a union leader, and a president of a youth religious organization. All the respondents remembered the campaign as seminal in their personal development, some reasons for which Newman and Blake explored in the account below.

—Editor



A half-century ago Upton Sinclair, the author of *The Jungle* and other muckraking novels, ran for governor of California. His campaign changed California politics forever.

Recent interviews with thirty people who participated in the 1934 gubernatorial campaign reveal that it dramatically affected their lives then and later. Philip Gerrard, for example, a retired executive of a large California food store chain, reflects that although he voted for Sinclair, he has regretted it ever since. Sinclair's unorthodox theories and tactics, he maintains, have permanently colored the perception of California's electoral politics as eccentric and "screwball." On the other hand, Frank Wilkinson, executive director emeritus of the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, remembers that in 1934 he vigorously opposed Sinclair as "an atheist in the eyes of my family, and we fully supported the *Los Angeles Times'* daily front page boxes against Sinclair's atheist writings." Lawrence Clark Powell, Emeritus Professor at the University of Tucson, voted for Sinclair but remembers more vividly chasing balls for his father and Sinclair at the Live Oaks Tennis Club in South Pasadena. A lifelong Republican, the elder Powell "said he first became suspicious of Socialism when he learned that Upton Sinclair regarded the back baseline as flexible!" Many of the interviewees would agree with the summation made by California Supreme Court Justice Stanley Mosk that the 1934 election and Sinclair's End Poverty in California or EPIC campaign was "the acorn from which evolved the tree of whatever liberalism we have in California."

Sinclair's writings as novelist, essayist, and journalist were exceedingly widely known by 1934. Hugh DeLacy, former congressman from Washington, remembers with pleasure reading Sinclair's *The Brass Check*

as a boy of twelve. "It changed my whole life," he says now. LaRue McCormick, a community activist and organizer in Los Angeles, ascribes her enthusiastic entry into the local consumers' cooperative at least in part to her youthful readings of Sinclair's works and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. Ted Molter, interviewed on his ninety-fourth birthday in Santa Monica, came to the Sinclair movement after a colorful life as a nurse at Bellevue Hospital, a soldier in the Army Medical Corps with General Pershing in Mexico in 1916, in France from 1917 to 1918, and on duty in Boston during the 1919 police strike. He, too, had read Sinclair's books. Melba Windoffer, active in Fresno during the EPIC campaign, remembers: "In those days we all read a lot. We used the public library, because we couldn't afford to buy books, but we read everything we could get our hands on."

In 1933, Sinclair, fifty-five years old and an ardent Socialist for thirty years, put some of his theories to the test. He changed his voter's registration from Socialist party to Democratic party and declared himself a candidate for governor in the August 1934 primaries. The late Jerry Voorhis, former congressman from Southern California, met Sinclair in 1933 at the home of John Packard, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney, when Sinclair told the group gathered there that he would run. Mort Newman, an eighteen-year-old-member of St. Mark's Methodist church in Los Angeles and a veteran of a youth delegation which investigated a bitter agricultural strike in the Imperial Valley, was invited in the autumn of 1933 to a meeting where Sinclair an-

END SINCLAIRISM IN CALIFORNIA



VOTE NO ON SINCLAIRISM ON NOVEMBER 6

Leaflet issued by California League
Against Sinclairism, one of many
ad hoc opposition groups.
CHS, San Francisco

nounced his intention to run the following year. Edward Mosk, Beverly Hills attorney and active in the Democratic party, was a freshman at UCLA and living in his parents' home in Pasadena where he discovered an announcement of the premier showing of Sergei Eisenstein's film *Que Viva Mexico!* at Bard's Colorado Theater. Mosk attended the premiere of the epic film which Sinclair had financed, and after it was shown, Sinclair announced his bid for the governorship. "Since I had read everything that Sinclair had ever written, I was thrilled at being

present to hear that announcement."

Although most of the interviewees were teenagers or young college students in 1934, they still vividly recall what California was like in that year—poverty, hunger, foreclosures, evictions and, like an insistent drumbeat, unemployment were commonplace. The United States Census for 1930 had reported more than three million unemployed, about twenty percent between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. LaRue McCormick remembers her neighborhood's Hooverville where homeless families lived in packing crates or tents. James Burford, former CIO staff member and print shop owner, describes going to lunch at Los Angeles' Ninth and Hill streets where he saw the body of a local businessman hurtle down to the sidewalk, one of the many bankruptcy suicides. On another day he watched a straggling hunger march near Olvera Street which the police attacked with clubs.

In the mid-thirties, George Kauffman, now a retired salesman, and Mort Newman were teenagers on the lookout for part-time jobs. Newman worked for twenty-five cents an hour in a print shop, on call every day but paid only for hours he worked. Kauffman found a job as a bus boy at a Pig 'n Whistle restaurant for a few hours a week. Ray Rees, former Bakersfield city councilman and print shop owner, remembers holding odd jobs in print shops and trying to sell advertising to owners of small businesses. "Hungry, frightened, discouraged people," he calls them. Kay Burton, later a union organizer, was the only one in her family of eight who had even the semblance of a job; she was an underpaid social worker in the state re-

lief office in Belvedere, a section of East Los Angeles. Jerry Voorhis had established and continued to work in a school for homeless boys in San Dimas.

In the face of the Depression's fearful effects, Sinclair's campaign came as a refreshingly naive and exciting event. "Production for use," he proclaimed. "Pensions to the Elderly." "Return foreclosed farms and homes to those who had owned them!" Perhaps even more novel than his slogans were his campaign practices. No big money contributions from corporations or individuals. In fact, no contributions over a dollar. Every piece of campaign literature—Sinclair's pamphlet, "I, Governor of California," leaflets, and the weekly newspaper, *EPIC News*, edited by Reuben Borough and eventually issued in million-copy editions—were paid for, sold, and distributed by volunteers at meetings, house-parties, churches, and door-to-door visits.

In 1934 Sinclair's campaign emerged as the most important among various nascent protest movements. Some had long histories of social, economic or political action like the Socialist party and various church social action youth groups. But others surfaced in response to the exigencies of the Depression. Elderly people, desperate without pensions, supported the Ham and Eggs movement, the Townsend Plan, and a proposed federal social security. The jobless formed Unemployed Councils, often organized with the active support of the Communist party. The Utopian Society, incorporating some secret rites and with somewhat vague aims, nevertheless attracted thousands to its meetings and public dis-



Reformer Upton Sinclair, sketched wearing pince-nez during his gubernatorial campaign by Peter Van Valkenburgh. Bancroft Library

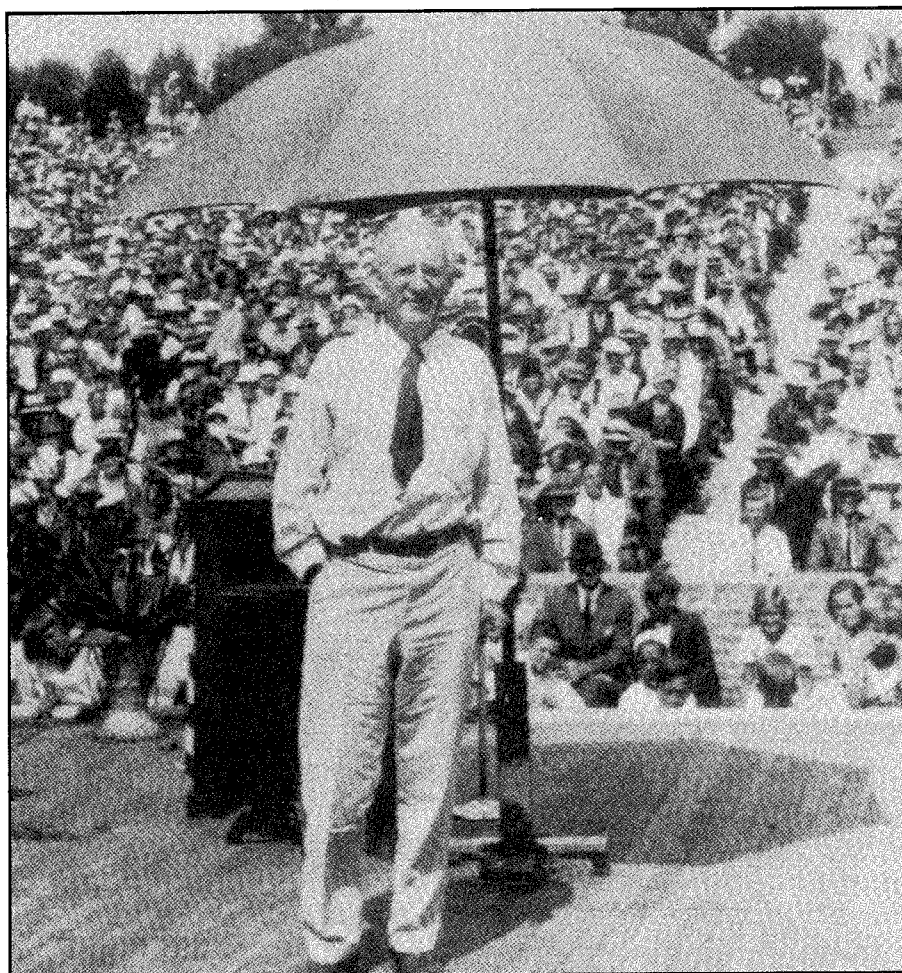
cussions. Dean McHenry, chancellor emeritus of the University of California at Santa Cruz, and his fiancée joined the Utopian Society in the summer of 1934 when he was a twenty-three-year-old graduate student in political science at the University of California at Berkeley; so did teenagers Ray Rees and Mort Newman. The group's discussions made them receptive to Sinclair's program.

College students and young people recently out of school also looked for change. Claudia Wil-

liams, a student at UCLA, became active in the Young Women's Christian Association on campus and eventually went on to become a stalwart of the Young Democrats, as did Stanley Mosk and Jim Burford after 1934. Richard Criley returned to UC Berkeley in 1934 as a graduate student in history where he was elected executive secretary of the Student League for Industrial Democracy.

Another organized segment of great importance to EPIC was the thriving cooperative movement. Jo Rhodehamel describes the activities

Sinclair's campaign came as a refreshingly naive and exciting event. "Production for use." "Pensions to the elderly." "Return foreclosed farms and homes to those who had owned them!"



The tireless Sinclair addressed audiences around the state, including this gathering in Inglewood on July 1, about his measures to end the nation's economic stalemate. Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana

of her late brother-in-law, Carl. A musician who had played with the Canadian Kilties Band before World War I, he became head of the Unemployed Exchange Association (UXA) in Oakland, a cooperative with more than 1,200 members. Beginning with a small group of women operating a handloom in Berkeley, the UXA eventually involved thousands of unemployed workers who hauled crops, wood, and fruit from farmers who were unable to sell their products, in exchange for all kinds of services. Walter Paine, now seventy-

nine and a long-time Socialist, remembers flying with a friend who had a pilot's license from field to field up and down the state negotiating barter exchanges with small farmers.

These burgeoning groups produced the loose coalition of people who supported Sinclair's campaign. The UXA, for example, never formally endorsed Sinclair, but thousands of coop members staunchly supported EPIC. LaRue McCormick tells of an informal coop organized in her own home. Buying milk at a

quarter a gallon, day-old bread at five cents a loaf, macaroni ends at two cents a pound, and vegetables from a Japanese truck gardener at a penny a bunch, the coop provided inexpensive food in return for chores and services to the suppliers. With scrap paper obtained free from a paper mill and printed on a mimeograph machine featuring material contributed by writers and artists, the coop turned out leaflets in support of EPIC. McCormick also describes the work of the Relief Workers' Protective Union, a community group which responded to emergency calls when unemployed families were evicted or had utilities turned off. The Protective Union moved furniture back into homes and negotiated with landlords and utility companies for extension or forgiveness of debts. Families in trouble were strongly attracted to Sinclair's campaign with its cooperative proposals.



After Sinclair's announcement of his candidacy, hundreds of EPIC clubs sprang up around the state.

Ted Molter worked in the Westlake Club in Los Angeles. Melba Windoffer, at home with two small children, addressed "endless envelopes and postcards" and occasionally attended outdoor meetings of a Fresno EPIC club. Newman aided the EPIC cause by substituting a Sinclair windshield sticker for the Frank Merriam sticker his Republican boss had placed on the printshop delivery truck. "For his own good," Newman insists. "In the areas I delivered in, the residents wouldn't have appreciated the Merriam boost and

OTHER HATS IN THE RING

Three parties in addition to the Democrats ran gubernatorial candidates in the 1934 campaign. Socialist candidate Milen Dempster, who recently was honored by the American Civil Liberties Union for his continuing activity in Marin County, received less than 3,000 votes. Dempster recalls that two months before the 1934 election, Norman Thomas, the national leader of the Socialist party, suggested that Dempster withdraw in favor of Sinclair. Although consumed by indecision, Dempster did not do so. "In retrospect," he says, "I should have withdrawn and supported Sinclair publicly. I didn't do the Socialists any good, although I didn't really do Upton Sinclair any harm."

Raymond Haight, a corporation lawyer with an awakening social conscience, ran as the Commonwealth party candidate and received 320,519 votes. Raymond Haight, Jr., who at age thirteen accompanied his father on speaking tours throughout the state, describes his father as a "conservative Christian Republican" in the 1920s. Deeply affected by the miseries he saw during the Depression, the elder Haight began to read widely and in 1932 voted for Socialist Norman Thomas for president. Haight, Jr., remembers a proffered \$100,000 bribe from Republicans and the promise of some affluent clients if his father would drop out of the race and leave the field to Merriam. Haight refused, running his campaign on modest loans from friends, the last of which was paid back out of Haight's estate when he died in 1948. Haight met with Sinclair twice during the campaign to discuss the possibility of one dropping out in favor of the other, but

nothing came of the discussions.

The Communist party ran Sam Darcy for governor in what turned out to be a shrill anti-EPIC campaign. Although the Communist party supported social legislation and in many cases led the efforts for pensions, relief, unemployment insurance, and job programs, it maintained that these were only temporary patches on a system gone rotten and that Sinclair was misleading his supporters by working within the Democratic party. At the community level, many people like Mickey Lima, who was twenty-six and had just joined the Communist party, thought Sinclair's EPIC program utopian but worked for him. The upper echelons of the Communist party, however, attacked Sinclair as a "Socialist fascist." Archie Brown, Communist candidate for state treasurer in 1934, admits the tone of the campaign was intemperate but remains convinced that Sinclair's campaign was less militant and less politically advanced than it should have been. Sinclair, he maintains, made the Communist party appear as the main enemy, and when Party bookstores were burned, leaders jailed, and offices wrecked, Sinclair blamed the Communists for having incited violence. Louise Todd Lambert, who joined the Communist party in 1930, marvels instead at the failure of the Communists to oppose Merriam.

The Communist leadership strategy never worked. Rank-and-file members often worked and voted for Sinclair. Darcy won a little over 5,000 votes while other Communists on the ticket such as Anita Whitney received almost 60,000 votes. □

might have done the trick some injury." Richard Criley joined the EPIC club on the Monterey Peninsula on the advice of his neighbor, writer Lincoln Steffens. Criley tried to do precinct work in his Model T Ford on the sparsely populated but mostly conservative peninsula, but says "he was not very productive."

The organization of the campaign at higher levels seems to have been mostly *ad hoc*. The most telling account of EPIC's helter-skelter approach is Frank Taylor's. Taylor had a job as a trader in a securities firm in Los Angeles. What he learned about banks, stocks and bonds, and the economy on his job frightened him. "I was a Republican, a good Christian young man," he says, "and what I heard scared the hell out of me." Since he worked from 7 A.M. to 1 P.M., he ambled into Sinclair headquarters one afternoon to ask Dick Otto, Sinclair's campaign manager, the exact nature of EPIC's economic plan. Taylor discovered to his surprise that they had all been so busy helping the new EPIC clubs organize that no one had evolved a concrete plan. "You do it," Otto said, and Taylor became EPIC's Director of Research. Taylor set up an organization called Research Associates with a number of local faculty members as advisors and with the help of Frank O'Brien, who had been fired from his job as economic advisor to the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. (The Chamber took exception to O'Brien's advice to stop recruiting people to move to Los Angeles for ecological reasons.) Sinclair and Otto hammered out an organization of twelve directors, jokingly called The Twelve Apostles, assisted by a secretary who, it was later discovered, had been planted

Sinclair, who was not prepared to become governor and only intended to wage an educational campaign, speculated about resigning if he were elected and turning the office of governor over to his campaign manager.

in their midst by the Republican party and who reported regularly to them. Taylor was appalled to learn that Sinclair, who was not prepared to become governor and only intended to wage an educational campaign, speculated about resigning if he were elected and turning the office of governor over to Dick Otto. Sinclair somewhat facetiously said, and repeated in a speech broadcast over KPFA in 1964, "I was afraid I was going to win. Had I, a big business friend in New York promised to tell me how to run the State of California."

Ellis Patterson, former congressman and lieutenant governor, gives another instance of Sinclair's less than encyclopedic grasp of economic matters. In a speech in Monterey before an audience of about 500, Sinclair gave a rousing talk, but when members of the audience asked a few technical questions, Sinclair admitted frankly that he did not know the answers. "Of course," Patterson laughs, "neither did the other speaker, Republican candidate Merriam."

Patterson's own campaign was unorthodox and unprecedented. A Republican assemblyman since 1928, he lost the Republican nomination in 1934. Already convinced that Sinclair "stood for the decent things," Patterson had 100,000 pencils imprinted with "Write in Ellis Patterson" and tossed them into passing cars, distributing them house to house in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties and at street corners and factory gates. In November Patterson, whose name did not appear on the ballot, was elected by a write-in vote to join others in Sacramento elected on the EPIC slate.

N. U. T. S.

**National Union of
Technocrats and Socialists**



Free Beer On Sundays
F. B. O. S.

**THE PLATFORM OF
ULYSEES STUPNALE**

**The Pied Piper of Pasadena
for GOVERNOR of CALIFORNIA**

as
BURIED and SUNK
in the
EPICAC PLAN

Sinclair's opponents produced a plethora of campaign literature portraying Sinclair as a fool, fiend, and dupe.



In the primary election in August 1934, Sinclair accomplished a miracle. Running against George Creel, the machine Democrat, and six more would-be candidates, Sinclair garnered close to a half-million votes, more than all seven of his Democratic opponents' votes combined. No longer a freakish phenomenon, his campaign scared the Republicans, and in support of their candidate, Frank Merriam, they put together a bagful of "dirty tricks" unsurpassed until Watergate and the Plumbers of 1972. Bill Belton of Santa Cruz tells the story of Otis Lynn, the minister of a Presbyterian church in Walnut Creek, who committed the sin of renting the church hall to the Democratic party so that Upton Sinclair could be invited to

speak. His congregation leaders cancelled the invitation, claiming the church was never to be used for political meetings, although they used the hall for a Republican rally in Lynn's absence and handed out Republican literature in church. Pastor Lynn's contract was not renewed.

Ray Rees remembers a letter from Merriam's headquarters to the publishers of the weekly *Monterey Park Progress* where Rees was sporadically employed. "Defeating Upton Sinclair is so important to the future of our State," the message proclaimed, that the *Progress* should "donate to the cause" of Merriam's election a column-inch of campaign advertising for each paid column-inch.

George Kauffman, along with the entire work force at the Pig 'n Whistle restaurant, was required, on company time, to listen to a well-dressed man who informed the assembled employees that if Sinclair were elected, the Pig 'n Whistle chain of restaurants would be shut down. Albert ("Mickey") Lima, who worked in a Humboldt County lumber mill, recalls that the owner of the mill called a press conference in San Francisco at which he threatened to close down the company's mills if Sinclair were elected. The man also paid for billboards in the state which similarly announced his intentions. In the mill large posters showed Uncle Sam pointing a finger and sternly asking, "Is Your Job Safe?"

Many businesses taxed themselves heavily for a war chest to defeat Sinclair. Some companies exacted donations from their employees. This tactic was especially notorious in the Hollywood movie studios where a day's pay for the Merriam campaign became compul-

sory. The studios managed to raise a campaign fund of a half-million dollars, and the studio heads also threatened to move the studios, lock, stock, and chaps, to Florida. One of the studios' more effective efforts was the production of several shorts to be shown as part of regular newsreels. David Platt of Long Beach, New York, describes one produced by MGM: "The film zeroes in on a dirty old man with a heavy foreign accent, 'Russian whiskers' and a menacing look in his eye—the full '30s Hollywood caricature of a radical. He is telling an 'inquiring reporter' that he is 'voting for Seenclair . . . because if his system worked so well in Russia, vy wouldn't it work here?' This was contrasted with a shot of a demure elderly woman rocking on her front porch who explains she is voting for Governor Merriam, the Republican incumbent, 'Because I want to have my little home. It's all I have left in the world.' " After the elections Irving Thalberg admitted he had produced the shorts.

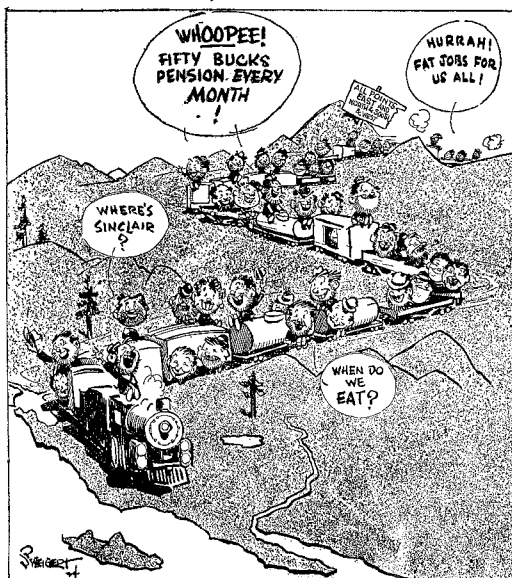
Several people active in the Sinclair campaign believe that out-right fraud was widespread in the counting of Sinclair's final vote. Frank Taylor collected testimony from several voters whose votes for Sinclair had not been recorded and sent the evidence to Senator George Norris in Washington, but Norris was never able to get his committee to take action.

On November 6, 1934, the tricks and the campaign contributions worked. Incumbent governor Merriam won the governorship with 1,138,620 while Sinclair trailed with 879,537 votes.

Sinclair never again ran for office. But the enthusiasm engendered by

UPTON SINCLAIR Says: "If I am elected about half the unemployed in the whole country will climb aboard freight trains and head for California."

CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME!



**DO YOU WANT THIS HORDE OF
OUTSIDERS TO MOVE IN
ON YOUR JOB?**

Sinclair's opponents suggested that the EPIC Plan would be an open invitation to the nation's unemployed who would "tramp" to California and take jobs belonging to Californians. Bancroft Library

his EPIC campaign remains vivid. Jerry Voorhis, looking back with more than a touch of sadness, recalled before his death, "In 1934 we had hopes. We were down in the dumps, but people were helping each other. . . . There weren't any nuclear weapons in 1934. My generation is going to escape, [but] we're going to kill off our children and grandchildren. We should have been willing to take a risk for peace." □

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NEW YORK DISCOVERS GOLD! IN CALIFORNIA

How the press fanned the flames of gold mania

by Barry L. Dutka

“W

e are on the brink of an Age of Gold,” proclaimed one editorial. “The Eldorado of the Old Spaniards is discovered at last,” trumpeted another. These exuberant comments appeared in different New York City newspapers in December 1848, corroborating previous rumors that gold had been discovered in California more than ten months earlier. The inconclusive reports which had appeared in the New York press the previous summer, however, had already catalyzed a manic response known as “Gold Fever.” The press, including the *New York Herald*, the *New-York Daily Tribune*, and *The Evening Post*, not only reported this phenomenon but played a significant role in encouraging it.¹

Information relating to the discovery of gold in California first appeared in the *Herald* on August 19, 1848. It printed a letter dated April 1, 1848, from a New York Volunteer in San Francisco, a former *Herald* subscriber, who stated that he was “credibly informed that a quantity of gold, worth in value, \$30” had been recently found “in the bed of a stream of the Sacramento.”² The press and the community initially responded to this news with skepticism, at best cautious optimism, an attitude which prevailed for the next two months.

Similar letters from California, however, began ap-

pearing in other New York newspapers with additional information about the discovery, the substantial mineral wealth of California, the gold mining process, the mania, and the quick fortunes being made. One letter signed “W.C.” described the gold region as extending “a hundred miles in one direction and fifty in another” and predicted that “ten thousand men in ten years could not exhaust it.” Apparently five thousand men were already engaged in gold mining. W.C. wrote further: “The farmers have thrown aside their plows, the lawyers their briefs, the doctors their bills, the priests their prayer-books, and all are now digging gold.” One man, he reported, had panned \$500 worth of gold in six days.³

Thomas O. Larkin, an early pioneer in California and former American consul in Monterey, asserted: “I do not think I am exaggerating in estimating the amount of gold obtained on the rivers I have mentioned at ten thousand dollars a day, for the last few days.”⁴ Letters like Larkin’s, with their ever-increasing stream of information, were undoubtedly important in shaping the reaction of the New York City press and community.

The first editorial comment on the gold discovery appeared in the *Herald* in late September and urged the public to be cautious. It declared:

No doubt the golden tales of these golden streams will excite the imaginations of many ardent and sanguine minds, and lead them to think of packing up and moving off to regions



"California News" by William Sidney Mount (1850) depicts the excitement engendered by New York City newspaper accounts of the discovery of gold. Courtesy The Museums of Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York

(Facing) As depicted by the press, New York's goldseekers frequently sought not to pan for gold but to cash in on the demand for mercantile goods in California. CHS Fine Arts Collection, San Francisco

where they may hope to become rich thus rapidly. To all such we would say, beware of the mania of hasty money-making; beware of seeking to become rich by sudden and extraordinary means; be assured that all the gold in the world will not make you happy.⁵

Less than a week later the *Herald* softened its position, commenting enthusiastically that "the impetus thus given to trade and commerce" by the discovery would "promote the spirit of emigration to the shores of our new territory." The editorial cautioned that not all who emigrated in search of gold could expect to have their hopes fulfilled, that the gold excitement might die "a sudden death," yet it conceded that the inducements to move to California, namely, the rich soil and the healthful climate were not "in the least diminished."⁶

The *Post* and the *Tribune* refrained from making any

speculation regarding the California gold prior to December. In contrast, the *Herald's* enthusiasm increased with the flow of reports from California. An editorial in that newspaper at the end of November, for instance, asserted: "It is beyond all question that gold, in immense quantities, is being found daily in this part of our territory, and that every pursuit of trade or business is abandoned."⁷ Notwithstanding the restraint observed by both the *Post* and the *Tribune*, a feverish excitement was beginning to grip the New York City community.

The city's mercantile community began exhibiting gold mania by early fall. In anticipation of the huge profit to be made as a result of the gold discovery, extensive commerce with California was inaugurated in October. The *Post's* "City Intelligence" column reported on October 19 that a ship had sailed for California with a cargo worth in excess of \$70,000 that "would supply a very extensive country store." A letter in the *Herald* observed: "Any person strolling along our docks cannot but be struck with the quantity of merchandize, of all kinds, which is marked and being shipped to the new El Dorado—California." It asserted further "that

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nearly a million of dollars worth of supplies" had been shipped "within the last thirty days."⁸ Undeterred by admonitions that substantial losses would be suffered if the reports of gold from California were exaggerated, the New York merchants thus escalated their trade even in light of reports such as that from Captain Christopher Allyn of the ship *Izaak Walton*, who complained that seamen were deserting their ships and fleeing to the gold fields.⁹

Though the avenues of commerce were being established to California by the fall of 1848, there is no evidence in the press that an emigration movement of any significance had as yet shown life in New York City. Many people remained skeptical until official confirmation in December, at which time gold mania swept the urban centers of the East.

This new phase of gold mania was catalyzed by President Polk's annual State of the Union address delivered to Congress on December 5, 1848, and printed in the New York City press the following day. The message contained an entire paragraph acknowledging the California gold discovery. A letter written by California's territorial governor to the Secretary of War in mid-

August had convinced Polk that the discovery was authentic. This letter, which appeared in the newspapers two days after the presidential message, added fuel to the escalating mania. "No capital is required to obtain this gold, as the laboring man wants nothing but his pick and shovel and tin pan, with which to dig and wash the gravel; and many frequently pick gold out of the crevices of rocks with their butcher knives, in pieces from one to six ounces."¹⁰ During the rest of December a veritable deluge of information regarding California gold, appeared daily in the press.

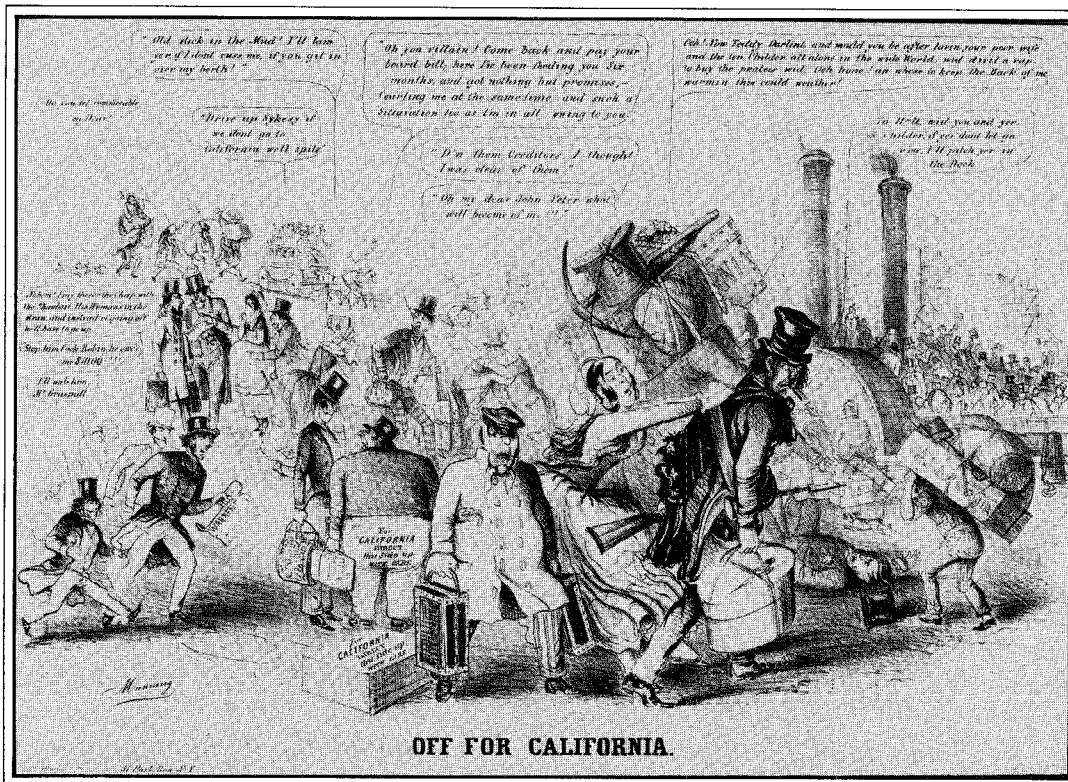
President Polk's message dissipated all remaining skepticism. The press became thoroughly imbued with gold mania. An editorial in the *Tribune* boldly predicted that California mines would yield "at least One Thousand Million of Dollars" within the next four years. The *Herald* characterized the gold discovery as the "greatest and most startling, not to say miraculous" that the previous half-millennium had produced. On December 7 the *Tribune* asserted: "The leading topic of conversation in the street for the last few days has been California Gold." A few days later the *Herald* described the prevailing excitement most colorfully when it declared: "The gold mania rages with intense vigor, and is carrying off its victims hourly and daily."¹¹

The commercial and financial significance of the gold discovery became increasingly evident and a topic of much concern to the newspapers. The *Herald's* "Commercial Affairs" column on December 7 predicted that the gold mines would "create a complete revolution in financial and commercial affairs" in New York City. An editorial in the same newspaper contended that the commercial ramifications of the gold discovery were unlimited. The paper naively observed:

Commerce, with all its abundant blessings, will be extended to a region comparatively unknown previous to this period. The aboriginal inhabitants of this hitherto wild and uncultivated part of the continent, will become consumers of manufactures; and in return for what they consume, they will give the wealth which they gather from the soil and streams of their country.

The *Herald* further identified the need for a transcontinental railroad to allow the East to avail itself of commercial opportunities on the West Coast, and ultimately in the Orient.¹²

Gold mania reached Wall Street in December. A strong speculative spirit began to pervade the financial



Many popular lithographs portrayed gold-seekers as knaves seeking to abandon family responsibilities and escape creditors. CHS Fine Arts Collection, San Francisco

A rare informal daguerreotype shows nine gold miners displaying the tools of their new profession, including a pistol. CHS, San Francisco

community, manifesting itself in the activity of the stock market. On December 10 the *Herald's* "Commercial Affairs" column reported: "The California gold fever rages in Wall Street to an enormous extent, and fancy stocks have taken an upward start on the strength of it." One day later the same column dramatically exclaimed: "We are about entering upon a new era in money matters." Despite the fact that no appreciable amount of California gold had been received in the East, nor was any anticipated in the near future, the financial community flourished and the *Herald* noted that the excitement was so intense "that the arrival of millions upon millions of dollars would hardly suffice" to satiate the community's hunger for gold.¹³

Expectations of profit pervaded the city's mercantile community. The *Post* understated the matter when it commented that the city's merchants were "coming to the conclusion that a new field is open to their enterprise." Some of the city's commercial firms had already formed joint-stock companies or associations to conduct trade with California. Some of these ventures were sizeable. The New York and California Joint Stock Company, for example, anticipated "a capital of \$50,000 in shares of \$10 each" and proposed to purchase a vessel to ship cargoes to California.¹⁴

Merchants unwilling or unable to relocate in California could easily secure agents eager to go to California

in their behalf. One prospective agent advertised that he was "about to visit the gold regions of California for business purposes" and that he would "be glad to communicate with any capitalist, merchant or association desirous of making adventures of goods or capital in that quarter, and who may wish to intrust them upon mutual account to a competent and faithful agent." One mercantile firm offered such an agent \$10,000 to take charge of their California business for one year.¹⁵

Merchants also seized the opportunity to increase their sales within New York City by catering to the needs of emigrants. They urged emigrants to buy not only the equipment and provisions they would need for themselves in California but also extra stocks to enable them to engage in trade in the gold region. The *Post* urged emigrants to take "such articles of necessary consumption as the market of San Francisco is not known to abound with."¹⁶ That many emigrants availed themselves of this advice is evident from the volume of business in the city and from the volume of freight on ships leaving for California. Many goods and services were in no way related to mining or the California market.

The legion of advertisements in the newspapers starting in mid-December reflected the strong and widespread desire to capitalize on the prevailing excitement.



"Don Pedro" advertised himself as "A Professor of Long Experience in teaching the languages" who "wishes to open a course of Spanish for those persons who are desirous of departing for California." Burton's Theater announced the performance of a new play entitled "California Gold Mines." The *Herald* informed its readers that it soon would publish a special *California Herald* edition featuring information pertaining to California gold and related matters.¹⁷

As New York City's gold mania intensified, the emigration movement became increasingly evident in the press. Early in December an editorial in the *Herald* remarked: "The mania for emigrating to California is spreading in every direction." Would-be miners and businessmen were understandably impressed by the numerous reports from California, all favorable attesting to "rivers of gold." Encouraging excerpts from the San Francisco *Alta California* were quoted in the *Herald*, for instance, identifying an eight-week period during which California miners averaged "from \$10 to \$350 per day," and California merchants had received "about \$250,000 worth for goods sold." The *Alta California* also reported that skilled labor was much in demand: "Carpenters and other mechanics have been offered \$15 a day, but it has been flatly refused."¹⁸

The press even volunteered travel advice for those who planned to emigrate to California. The *Herald* rec-

ommended travel by sea, either by way of Panama or Cape Horn. It provided information as to the distance, the travel-time, and the expense. In response to the "numerous inquiries" apparently received "about the most practicable routes to California," the *Post* in comparison dismissed the Panama route as being too time-consuming, hazardous, and expensive, and ruled out the various overland routes because of their length and difficulty. It recommended instead the Cape Horn route as "unquestionably" the safest and least expensive route despite its great distance. The *Tribune*, also deluged by "a superfluity of private letters, soliciting advice and information," recommended travel to California through Panama; alternatively, it recommended several overland routes.¹⁹

Information and advice relating to the California gold was available from sources other than the press. A number of books and pamphlets were hastily published in December, some even before President Polk's message, and these were on sale for 25¢ to \$2. One publisher, for instance, advertised on December 12 the imminent publication of *The Gold Mines of California*, an account based on "the notes of a returned Volunteer" revealing "the most interesting details of the Gold Mines . . . and every necessary information" and including "a Map of the country, and particularly of the Gold region."²⁰



New York City newspapers stirred up expectations about the California Gold Rush that mixed fact and wildest fantasy. CHS Fine Arts Collection, San Francisco

(Facing) Frequently intended to be instructive as well as humorous, lithographs published in New York advised would-be goldseekers to begin their journeys prepared for any eventuality. CHS, San Francisco

By mid-December prospective emigrants could also attend what purported to be authoritative lectures on "Gold" and "California." One newspaper announced that Dr. R.H. Collyer, Professor of Chemistry, would be speaking at Clinton Hall regarding "the most approved modes of washing Gold, mining, and all the apparatus" used in other countries. Another newspaper announced that Dr. Boynton would deliver a lecture at the Broadway Tabernacle concerning "the structure and formation of rocks, in which the precious metals are found, and on the gold of California." Dr. Collyer was persuaded to repeat his lecture because of popular demand.²¹

While the newspapers did indeed help foster the gold mania, they occasionally printed words of caution and restraint. An editorial in the *Tribune* discouraged emigration by "the wealthy, who have already their share of this world's goods" and by "those who are well employed here, and have families that need care and protection." The editorial concluded that California was a desirable destination only for rugged and energetic young men capable of tolerating a hard life and coping with frontier conditions. The *Tribune* elaborated that emigrants should not place all their hope in the uncertain occupation of mining, advising them instead to take along agricultural items—seeds, grafts, roots, and tools. It predicted that the people who would

prosper in California in the long-run would ultimately be those who farmed rather than mined. The *Post* also recommended a "more direct and honorable road to fortune than that which entices so many to the distant shores of El Dorado."²²

This sound advice was ignored, that is if anyone even took notice of it. The *Herald* remarked that gold fever raged with greater intensity in the city than did the cholera epidemic. On December 9 one newspaper reported that "the rush of gold hunters to the mines is very large," while another newspaper noted: "Adventurers from every street in the city are concerting measures and collecting funds to pay their passages to California." A commentary on emigration in the *Tribune* perceptively observed that emigration would be "enormous, whatever may be the success of emigrants in digging gold."²³

Young men composed the bulk of the emigrants. The *Herald* noted: "our young men—including mechanics, doctors, lawyers, and . . . clergymen, are taking leave of old associations, and embarking for the land of wealth." Not everyone, however, could afford the expense of the journey to the Pacific coast, and as a consequence, some sought financial backing through newspaper advertisements. One young man offered "half the profits of the adventure for 2 years" to a person who would "pay the expenses of his going and sustain



him while there." A second young man in need of financial support stated his desire to emigrate to California and begin a new tin and sheet-iron business, the occupation in which he was presently engaged. A third individual, claiming that he was a "good accountant" and that he possessed "a perfect knowledge of Spanish," publicized his wish "to engage as a clerk or assistant with some person about to establish business in California."²⁴

Virtually all emigrants who departed from New York City in December for California went by sea, especially by the route which involved crossing the Isthmus of Panama. Many of them followed the procedure urged by the *Post*, traveling in a cooperative fashion. A significant number of emigrant companies or associations were thereby being formed. As early as December 9, Harnden & Company, located at 6 Wall Street, advertised: "Persons desirous of emigrating, and having a cash capital of over \$200 can join an Association upon the most favorable terms." Within two days it had received 500 applications, mostly from young men. Other organizations of men included the "United Californians," described as "A Mutual Benefit Society" for gentlemen with \$500 capital, and a projected company of "twenty-five young men" which intended to "purchase tools, clothing, tents, [and] two months provisions" at a cost of about \$180 for each member.²⁵

All types of vessels, whatever the size or the facilities they offered, were in great demand. Starting December 9, numerous advertisements for passage appeared daily in the press; in the December 14 issue of the *Tribune*, for instance, there were almost a score of such advertisements. Some vessels were already booked to capacity. One vessel "was so full of passengers," according to the *Tribune*, "that four or five were taken, at their earnest request, with no better sleeping accommodations than the deck."²⁶

Vessels traveling to California were unable to maintain predictable schedules due to the high incidence of crew desertion. In recognition of the tremendous allure of the gold fields, sailors were subsequently hired in New York for a dollar a month "with the privilege of leaving the vessel on its arrival."²⁷

According to statistics later compiled by the *Herald*, from December 14 until the end of the month, 360 people departed New York City for California. Sixty made the passage in two vessels around Cape Horn, and 300 traveled in four vessels to Panama, where they crossed the territory and boarded ships on the Pacific coast to complete their journey.²⁸ Information concerning the number of emigrants who left New York City for California using land routes was not provided in the newspapers, and ocean routes were evidently preferred by residents of the port city and its environs. Overland travel was arduous, especially for those accustomed to urban life.

Despite the gold mania reported—and created by—the New York City press, the actual emigration from the city in December 1848 was numerically small. Many would-be goldseekers probably experienced difficulty in raising the price of the passage or in securing a place on one of the few California-bound ships. Others must have felt restrained by the beginning of the winter season and the need to settle affairs in New York City before embarking for the Pacific coast.

The impression of a city gripped by gold fever remains valid. On December 9 one newspaper perceived that gold mania was "only in its commencement."²⁹ Residents of New York City were destined to be found in significant numbers in the ranks of those who participated in the Gold Rush of 1849. Their involvement in that celebrated frontier phenomenon was testimony to the paramount role played by the press in nurturing New York City's gold fever epidemic of 1848.□

(see notes beginning on page 341.)



by Kevin Starr

THE WORLD OF
**OSCAR
LEWIS**

An appreciative salute
to the revered patriarch of
California writer-historians

Ever since 1913—the year he published his first article—the San Francisco Bay Area has been enriched by the persistent literary activity of Oscar Lewis. In and of himself, Oscar Lewis represents a certain continuity in San Francisco letters. As a young man in the early 1920s, Lewis used to attend soirees given by the aged poet Ina Coolbrith, who came to San Francisco as a young girl in the mid-1850s and who, along with Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard, Prentice Mulford and others, made the magazine *The Golden Era* (1852–1893) such a lively literary journal and San Francisco such a lively literary city. Symbolically at least, Oscar Lewis began his writing career with the blessings of the last survivor of the Literary Frontier.

Purity of heart, suggested the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, is to seek one thing, and Oscar Lewis has this purity. For more than seventy years now, Lewis has sought to write well about The City of San Francisco and the State

of California. Born in San Francisco in 1893 in a house at Jackson and Baker, just a few blocks away from where he now lives on Union Street, Lewis grew up in The City, Sebastopol, Red Bluff, and Berkeley. His father, a building contractor with offices at 18 Post Street on the ground floor of the Lick House, built many a Victorian home still standing in San Francisco.

Lewis graduated from Berkeley High School, then tried the University of California, Berkeley, for a while. He wanted to write. B.H. Lehman, then chairman of the English Department, gave Lewis some rather unorthodox advice. If you want to write, said Lehman, start writing. So Lewis quit school, rented an office and a typewriter, and started to write. That was in 1912, and Lewis has not stopped writing since, with the exception of the time he spent in the Ambulance Service in France during World War I and the wandering about Europe and North Africa he did just after the War.

Throughout the '20s, '30s, '40s and '50s, the years of San Francisco's provincial contentment, Oscar Lewis lived (on Taylor, then later on Union Street) and worked in The City. He has been a busy figure in a landscape—a reserved, good-humored protagonist in what is now a

lost and elegiacally revered San Francisco. The artist Maynard Dixon lived across the street from Oscar at 1644 Taylor Street. Dixon was then married to photographer Dorothea Lange whose sensitive portraits of Dust Bowl migrants later made photography the major means of documenting the suffering of impoverished migrants. Also living on that block of Taylor Street was Erskine Scott Wood, bon vivant, raconteur, and author of the local classic *Heavenly Discourse*. Colonel Wood—horror of horrors!—lived without benefit of clergy with the poet Sara Bard Field.

Oscar Lewis also knew Gertrude Atherton, the dowager empress of local letters, who lived with her daughter on Green near Fillmore, where she held weekly salons for the literati. The talk there was of London and Paris and Ambrose Bierce, who once in the late 1880s, compulsive womanizer that he was, tried to kiss young Gertrude (so she claimed) in the train station at Sunol, where Bierce was staying for his health.

Lewis knew Edward Robeson Taylor in his last years, the lawyer-physician-poet whom San Franciscans asked to lead The City as mayor after the scandals of the Ruef trials. Another Lewis friend was Edward O'Day, editor of the *Recorder*, who

For more than seventy years, historian Oscar Lewis has chronicled the history of California. CHS, San Francisco

loved to quote Latin, and Robert Cowan, the bibliographer living out in the Mission on Treat Street, who became the first librarian of the William Andrews Clark Library in Los Angeles. Tall, dapper, learned, extraordinarily industrious, literary critic Joseph Henry Jackson of the *Argonaut*, later of the *Chronicle*, and another member of Lewis' circle, was providing The City with a high level of literary journalism that ceased completely with his passing. Another friend was John Barry, who wrote a wonderful column for *The Call-Bulletin* and who commuted daily to The City by ferry from Sausalito where he lived in an old, rustic hotel.

When Lewis worked as secretary to the Book Club of California in the 1920s, poet George Sterling, the Uncrowned King of Bohemia, used to drop by to autograph books of poetry for Lewis to send out. Sterling was by turns shy and riotous. When arrested for wading at midnight into Stowe Lake in Golden Gate Park to pick water lilies in the company of a disrobed chorus girl, he paid his fine with inscribed books of poetry. During the 1920s, Lewis traveled down to Montalvo, Senator Phelan's summer retreat near Saratoga, for lunch on the great verandah. He knew Clarkson Crane, the Berkeley novelist, and Charles Caldwell Dobie, whose *San Francisco, A Pageant* (1933) is one of the best books ever written about The City.

Kevin Starr is the author of the forthcoming *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford University Press) and other books and articles on California history.

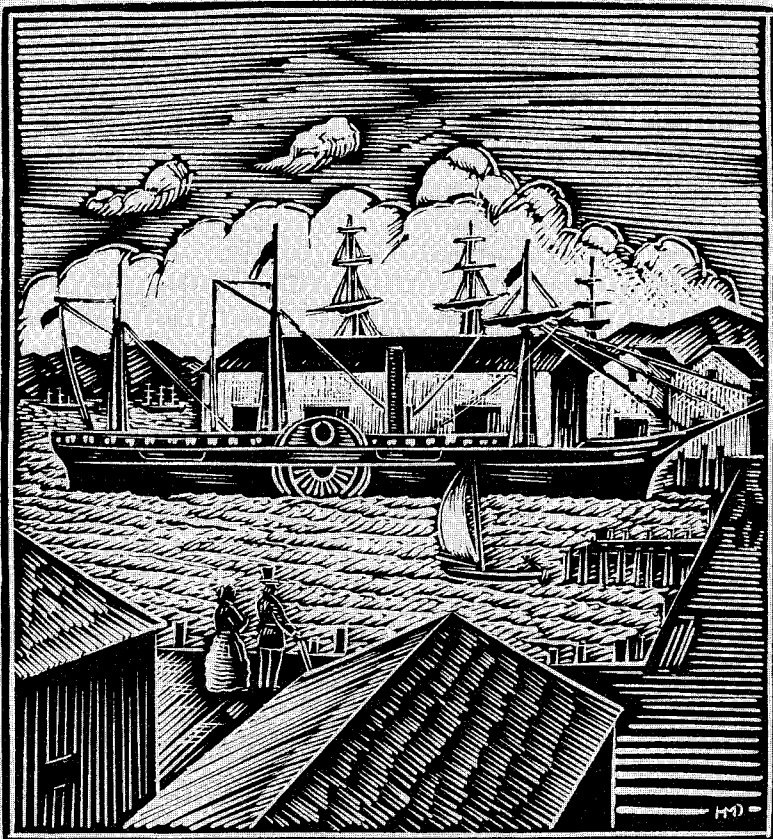
The fine printing scene, then as now, was lively. Lewis knew the great John Henry Nash, who worked behind his trays in a blue smock in his own building on Sansome Street, looking every inch the master printer, which he was; the Grabhorn brothers at 47 Pine, in a shop above the Orange Blossom candy store, who along with their designer Valenti Angelo were making printing history; and young William Matson Roth, founder of the Colt Press, obsessed in those days with fine printing, later active as a UC Regent and the developer of Ghirardelli Square.

Operating in this landscape of local creativity, Oscar Lewis has worked steadily, patiently over the years, and the harvest of his effort will some day fill a rather extensive bibliography. One of its high points is *The Big Four* (1938), already a classic of western history, kept in print by its publisher Knopf for more than forty years. Its companion volume *Silver Kings* (1947) is likewise a masterpiece of narrative and portraiture. Many of Oscar Lewis' books—*George Davidson: Pioneer West Coast Scientist*, *The War in the West: 1861–1865*, *Sea Routes to the Gold Fields*, and my favorite, *Bay Window Bohemia*—broke new ground in scholarship and interpretation. Others—*San Francisco: Mission to Metropolis*, for instance—are masterpieces of summarizing statement. Historian Lawrence Clark Powell believes that Lewis' 1942 novel, *I Remember Christine*, is the finest San Francisco novel since Frank Norris' *McTeague* (1899). I agree. Lewis is also one of our leading chroniclers of Nevada, which, from a slightly nineteenth-century perspective, he sees as of a piece

with the California story.

What makes Lewis' narratives classics? Each proceeds, as all good historical writing must, on two levels, one depicting the specific story and the other suggesting a larger process. From this perspective, the *Big Four* and *Silver Kings* are about the railroad and the Comstock Lode; but, of equal importance, they are enduring case studies in the interactive energies underlying the creative work of capital in the nineteenth-century Far West. Contained in each of Lewis' narratives is a specific story and the functioning structure, the process, of a more encompassing process. The same is true for his biography of George Davidson, which is, as well, a narrative paradigm of the special role played by Yale-trained scientists in the opening of the Far West. *Sea Routes to the Gold Fields* thus becomes an important insight into the maritime history of California, and *Bay Window Bohemia* tells a San Francisco story but also shows the process whereby the creative imagination translated to California the high-art past of the European heritage.

This is why the books written by Lewis do not date. Since they are not energized by a tightly structured academic perspective or ideology, they survive changes in academic fashions. Skillful narrative proves resilient long after over-wrought analytical structures have made other works of history smell either of the lamp or of out-of-date interpretation. At the same time, generation after generation of historians, no matter what their perspective, can return to Lewis' books to find out what happened. Take *The Big Four* for instance. As a narrative, it is useful to either a Marxist or an



SOME CITIES, LIKE SOME INDIVIDUALS, grow up too rapidly. San Francisco, more precocious than most, came close to skipping her childhood entirely. As early as 1853, old settlers were recalling the boisterous infancy of the city—a remote and half legend-

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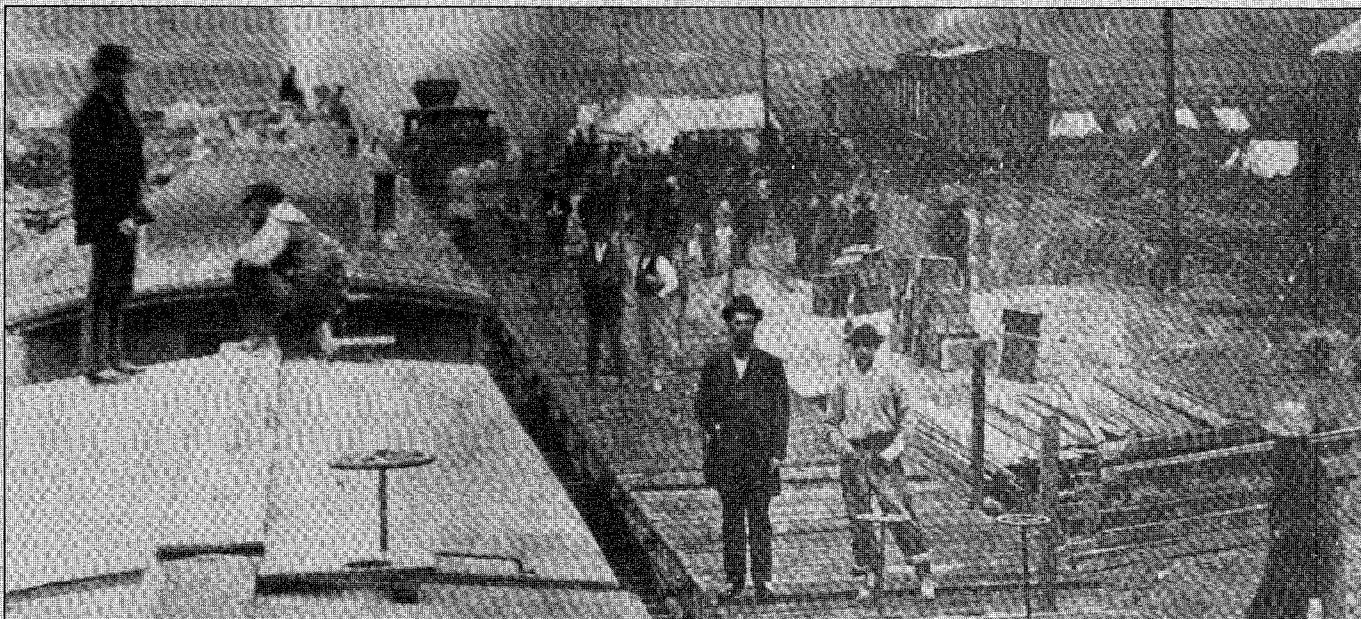
Page from Lewis' *Lola Montez: The Mid-Victorian Bad Girl of California* (1938), illustrated with Mallette Dean's woodcuts.

apologist for capitalism. The interpretation may vary, but the story—as told so masterfully by Lewis—endures. That is the definition of a classic, a work of intellect and creative imagination that has the ability to endure beyond shifts of fashion.

In each of his works, whether focused or panoramic, scholarly or summarizing, Oscar Lewis displays one persistent trait: sympathy. Oscar Lewis genuinely likes and admires the people he writes about—or at least tries to find something likable or admirable in them. There is in all of Oscar Lewis' books a kindliness, a sympathy for the human condition, that perfectly expresses the essential *anima naturaliter christiana* of the man.

And his prose—elegant, luminous, unpretentious, and always clear and to the point. Oscar Lewis writes beautiful English. His prose style, as is appropriate in a man of his age, is touched more than slightly by the tone and style of the nineteenth-century English and American essay. I can hear often the voice of Charles Lamb or Oliver Wendell Holmes in Lewis' writings: a supple, appreciative tone, a restrained conversationality that resists chattiness, a preference for an open style that avoids the cadences and repetitiveness of the periodic sentence.

How fortunate for us all to have yet amongst us a man of letters whose career and personality so elegantly express the taste and commitment to local culture of a vanishing San Francisco. The values Oscar Lewis has so successfully pursued in his life and work—values of work and steady civility—are much needed amidst the confusions of our urgent, headlong present. □



The raw April of 1869 ended and the seven-year job drew toward its close. The Central Pacific's rails reached Promontory [Utah] first, for an uncompleted rock fill held up track-layers of the rival road, and its rails did not reach the junction point until a day later. On May 2 General Dodge wrote his wife: "There will not be much of a time here—no demonstration; but in the east and further west I expect they will celebrate."

The prediction proved incorrect. Back at the Central's head office at Sacramento plans for a celebration had been under way for weeks. On May 7 the first of several special trains arrived at the railhead, its occupants expecting to witness an immediate wedding of the rails. Instead they found the little village drenched and forlorn in a driving rain, its sodden street an extensive mudhole, colored bunting hanging limp and dripping across the façades of its wooden shacks.

This was not the gala reception the Californians had pictured. A hundred feet from the Central's railhead, the end of the Union's tracks could be seen through the

rain. Of the eastern party and the trainloads of celebrants rumored to have left Omaha two days earlier nothing was visible. Stanford and his guests stared moodily at the landscape, then climbed gingerly down the damaged steps of his private car—it had been struck by a coasting pine log on its passage down the east side of the Sierra—to file messages of inquiry with telegraph operators of both lines, housed in adjacent damp tents.

But the storm was general throughout the Rockies, and the Union's headquarters at Ogden reported floods and washouts on its line east of the town. Nothing was said of a further complication; money was lacking to pay many of the Union's workmen, and Vice-President Durant had to cope with still another strike. Word reached Promontory that the eastern party would not arrive until Monday. It was then Friday. Stanford's party faced without enthusiasm the prospect of three days' contemplation of the wet landscape.

Back on the Coast, plans had been made for elaborate celebrations on Saturday. Stanford wired news of the delay, but the West had always considered Saturday the proper day for celebrating, and the message was ignored. Thus while San Francisco, Sacramento,

and a dozen lesser towns commemorated the event with bands and fireworks and illuminated parades, time dragged in the car of the Central Pacific's president.

Some of the party relieved the boredom by a visit to the nearest Union Pacific construction camp. There Jack Casement loaded them into a battered coach and a long day was spent on a tour of flooded Weber Canyon. They returned to Stanford's car tired and damp and hungry, late Saturday evening. The downpour continued. That night the car was drawn back thirty miles to a siding at Monument Point and the next morning its windows framed the same landscape from a new viewpoint, one that included the gray surface of Salt Lake. Throughout the morning the steward's shotgun was intermittently active on the lake shore, and at luncheon a mess of plover lent variety to the bill of fare.

Stanford's car had not been moved back from the end of the track solely to provide his guests with a view of Salt Lake. Two days of fraternizing among the officials had not meant that the rivalry was at an end. Both continued to jockey for advantages until the rails were

A rugged tent and boxcar railroad camp on the Lower Canyon of the Truckee River in 1868. CHS, San Francisco

Reprinted with permission from *The Big Four, The Story of Huntington, Stanford, Hopkins and Crocker, and of the Building of the Central Pacific* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1938).

THE BIG FOUR

joined. Rival officials recognized that the company building a siding at Promontory would have an advantage in the future control of the settlement. The Central Pacific's plans were laid in secret. A hundred miles back, a worktrain had been made up, loaded with men and materials; only the storm delayed execution of the coup. Sunday night the rain ceased and the sky cleared. The Central construction train moved from the rear, timed to reach Promontory at daybreak. It arrived on schedule—and was greeted by derisive shouts from Casement's Irish track-layers. They had been working all night; the Union Pacific siding was completed.

It was the last skirmish before the lines were joined. Monday, May 10, was clear and cold. During the night Promontory's liquid street had turned to ice. The spot was five thousand feet high and the wind had a penetrating quality that kept unacclimated visitors shuttling between the town's five saloons and the glowing stoves of the cars. As the morning advanced, crews set to work closing the remaining yards of the gap. It had been planned that two special trains arrive at the same moment, from east and west, as an impressive prelude to the joining of the rails. Instead, battered construction trains rolled in from both directions, loaded with graders and track-layers and teamsters, all intent on seeing the show.

The entire population of the ephemeral town augmented the crowd, and throughout the morning other groups filtered in from near-by construction camps on foot or on the broad backs of draft horses. Stanford's party again

made the thirty-mile trip from Monument and was pushed to the siding to make room for another flag-decorated special from the Coast. This bore other company officials, including lean, spare Mark Hopkins, his shoulders hunched against the wind. The two remaining partners were absent. Huntington was in New York, and Crocker, who always delighted in celebrations, had unaccountably remained behind at Sacramento.

Midmorning passed with no sign of the Union Pacific's special. The crowd faced the cold wind and gathered in shivering groups while work crews completed the final few feet of track, leaving one rail on the side nearest the lake to be placed later. Delay succeeded delay. Noon passed—it was after one o'clock, after two. Telegraph instruments on tables beside the track chattered impatient inquiries from east and west. What was wrong? The wind died down and it grew uncomfortably warm. The crowd, hungry and impatient, intruded on the cleared space and had to be periodically forced back. The stage had long been set and the audience was near the end of its patience. It was a lamentably late curtain.

At last the screech of a Union Pacific locomotive was heard and the crowd set up an ironical cheer. A group of Central Pacific officials, led by Stanford and Hopkins, descended from their car and tramped through the mud to greet the arriving dignitaries. Spectators surged forward, staring at Durant's shining Pullman, at the dapper vice-president's velvet coat, and cheered again as formal greetings were exchanged. The celebration took on an unplanned military aspect,

for the train carried several companies of the 21st Infantry, and the regimental band, bound from Fort Douglas to San Francisco's Presidio. The soldiers were put to work forcing back the crowd and opening a lane for the cameramen, there to preserve the historic event.

Perhaps five hundred persons were present: Irish and Chinese laborers, teamsters, cooks, engineers, train crews, officials, guests, and parties of excursionists from California and Salt Lake City. The latter, to the disappointment of the Californians, did not include Brigham Young. The Prophet had sent his apologies and two aides: Bishop John Sharp and Colonel Savage, the latter carrying one of the heavy box cameras. A number of women were among the excursion parties, including the wives of two Central Pacific officials: Mrs. Strobridge and Mrs. Ryan. A group of Promontory's strumpets were also on hand, though their presence passed unrecorded in the official dispatches.

The belated wedding got under way. Ceremonial spikes, ties, and the final rail were carried forward by a picked squad of Chinese, their denim pantaloons and jackets newly scrubbed, their pigtails neatly braided and tied. While necks craned, a laurel tie was embedded, the rail put in place, the telegraph operators reporting each step over wires kept open throughout the nation. A Massachusetts pastor offered an invocation so comprehensive that at its end the telegrapher tapped out: "We have got done praying; the spike is about to be presented."

Not one, but several spikes were presented, each with a speech. One was of Comstock silver;



another was an alloy of gold, silver, and iron, symbolical of Arizona Territory's varied mineral resources; gold and silver spikes from Idaho and Montana followed; then two of gold from California and a silver sledge-hammer for their driving. The spikes, except the final one of gold, were placed in holes provided for them, hammered home by inexperienced taps of officials and distinguished guests. Nearly an hour was so consumed. At last the final spike was inserted, a telegraph line was attached to it and another to the hammer, so that the actual blows might be carried throughout the nation—to such devices were the ingenious driven in an age deprived of radio. The nation waited while Stanford raised his hammer for the historic stroke. The silver hammer missed the spike, but the telegrapher, prepared for the contingency, simulated the blow with his key. At once the magnetic ball dropped from its pole above the Capitol dome at Washington. San Francisco's dozens of fire bells began tolling, salvos of cannon boomed, and factory whistles screeched in scores of cities from coast to coast. In a country town north of San Francisco a boy under six was lifted on his father's shoulder and stared over heads at a sheet of paper

newly pasted on a newspaper office door; he was told that all these men were cheering because soon everyone would be rich.

At Promontory, while the crowd shouted and locomotive whistles responded to taut cords, Amos Bouscher elbowed his way to the side of a San Francisco jeweler who was busily collecting five dollars from all who wished watch-charms made from the historic golden spike. Sixty years later Bouscher still retained his tattered receipt and a growing belief that the stranger must have been an impostor. Meantime, Vice-President Durant completed the driving of the spike. The 21st Infantry band played *America*. Photographers went through their routine as plate after plate was exposed. Two engines moved cautiously over the new-laid rail, touched cowcatchers, and their engineers were given the first drinks from the foaming neck of a champagne bottle. In San Francisco, F. Bret Harte, who realized that magazine verse should be timely, inquired in the pages of his *Overland Monthly*:

*What was it the engines said,
Pilots touching—head to head. . . .*

Officials and a few guests retired to Durant's shining car to frame a message to President Grant, while

workmen, prudently detailed to the task in advance, drew out the silver and gold spikes, removed the laurel tie. Souvenir-hunters, undiscouraged, proceeded to cut chips from the substituted tie, even to hack bits off the iron rail. In the ensuing months both rail and tie had several times to be replaced.

By then the afternoon was nearly gone; officials hurried to a belated luncheon on Stanford's car, and *hoi polloi* sought the food and drink promised them by the two companies. They received both in abundance. By nine o'clock the celebration had reached a stage where a grand ball, a banquet, and a torchlight procession were in simultaneous progress. Two weeks later Central Pacific auditors O.K.'d bills totaling \$2,200 "on account of celebration upon completion of the railroad." On the gray morning of the 11th the specials started on their return trips east and west; before nightfall transcontinental trains were moving cautiously over the new rails under the eyes of Promontory's diminished population. □

After several hours' delay, chief engineers of the Central Pacific (left) and Union Pacific railroad shake hands at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869.
Bancroft Library

REVIEWS

Edited by James J. Rawls

The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer.

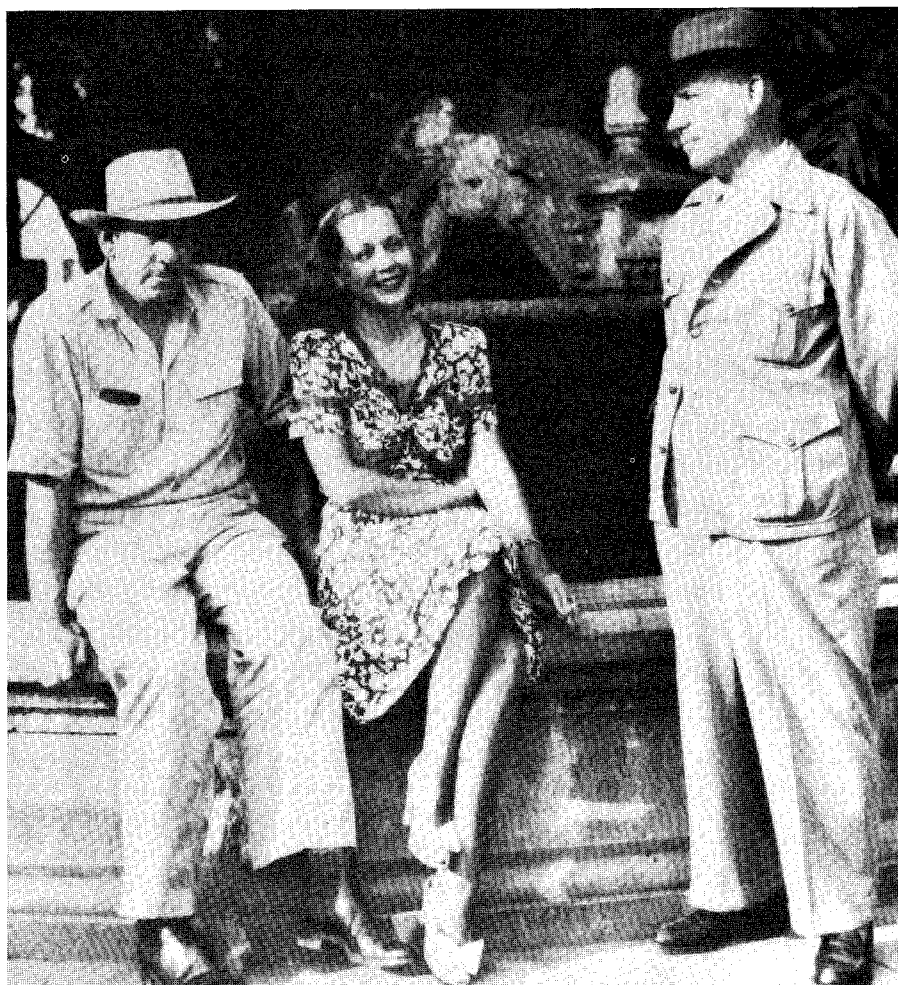
By Jackson J. Benson. (New York: The Viking Press, 1984. xiv, 1116 pp. \$35.00 hard.)

John Steinbeck: The California Years.

By Brian St. Pierre. (San Francisco: Chronicle Press, 1984. \$7.95 paper.)

Reviewed by Graham C. Wilson, Professor of English, San Francisco State University, and author of *Steinbeck Country*.

With the publication of the *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, John Steinbeck, age 37, completed a wonderfully productive—and, to the critics, unpredictable—decade: *Cup of Gold* (1929), a historical romance about pirate Henry Morgan; *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932), a volume of related short stories set in the Corral de Tierra area between Monterey and Salinas; *To a God Unknown*, a man-and-nature novel set largely around Jolon in the southern part of the Salinas Valley; *Tortilla Flat* (1935), in which the metaphor of tide-pool colonial life combines with King Arthur's Round Table in a story of the Paisanos living on the slopes above Monterey; *In Dubious Battle* (1936), a strike novel, equally condemned by the Left and by the Right; *Of Mice and Men* (1937), a novel of havenot itinerant farm laborers; *The Red Pony* (1937), a group of short stories which is usually presented to children, though more proper auditors would be parents; *The Long Valley* (1935), a collection of stories laid in what has come to be known as Steinbeck Country, within the beauty of which human beings strive for happiness and largely fail; "Their Blood is Strong" (1938), a pamphlet reprint of a series in the *San Francisco News* on the plight of the almost 90,000 migrants a year piling into California in the late 1930s; and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), a novel in which Steinbeck brought to-



In 1945 John Steinbeck and his wife Gwendolyn visited Cuernavaca, Mexico, with Jack Wagner, co-writer of *A Medal for Benny*. Bancroft Library

gether experience, observation, technique, imagination, and indignation to produce the book by which he will probably be best remembered.

After 1939 there would be a dozen more books, including *The Sea of Cortez* (1941), co-authored by Edward F. Ricketts, the "Doc" of *Cannery Row* (1945) and *Sweet Thursday* (1954); and *East of Eden* (1952), which was intended to be, Steinbeck wrote in *Journal of a Novel* (1969), "the story of my country and the story of me . . . and of the whole [Salinas] Valley which I am using as a microcosm of the whole nation."

In none of Steinbeck's California works, however, nor anywhere else in his lifetime did he write much about himself. Since his death in 1968 there have been several limited efforts to perform this task for him, but only now has

Jackson Benson given us an 1100-page volume which is and probably will remain the definitive biography of John Steinbeck. Details will emerge or be modified, but this book will certainly remain the biography.

As readers of his work on Ernest Hemingway know, Benson is an acute critic of literature. As a reader of the volume under discussion will soon discover, he is also a very good teller of stories. The title is not frivolous; Steinbeck's life was full of adventures. Then too, Benson's energy is inexhaustible—or at least it was through the decade-and-a-half of preparing this book, and it is a good thing he started so long ago. Many of these interviewees, numbering in the hundreds, have since died, among them Carol Henning Brown, Steinbeck's first wife and his courageous critic-editor

through *The Grapes of Wrath*; and Gwyn Conger Steinbeck, his second wife and the mother of his two sons, Thom and John IV.

So much research has made possible the writing of a much fuller account of Steinbeck's life than we have ever before had. Benson is the first to deal adequately with Steinbeck's life from 1941 to his death in 1968, during which period he only intermittently resided in California. Much of the story is in general circulation for the first time—for instance many details of his work, indeed military service—in Great Britain and in the Mediterranean during the Second World War. We also lose a number of good stories: Steinbeck did not make a trip west from Oklahoma with a Joad-like family, or any other migrant family. But there is plenty left to tell. It is a long way from assistant night chemist at Spreckels' Sugar Factory to presidential adviser and Air Force One, even after having become the first native Californian Nobel Prize winner for Literature.

But the book is not a calendar of events. Benson writes about the background and preparation for each work, fiction or non-fiction. *Travels with Charley in Search of America* is, after all, a worthy part of the Steinbeck canon. *The True Adventures* is a fine and affectionate book, though never overly indulgent of its subject.

Brian St. Pierre's *John Steinbeck: The California Years* is the latest in Chronicle Books' "The Literary West" series: "Designed for a popular audience," according to the publisher, "these fast-paced entertaining editions are revealing portraits of the writers and demonstrate the influence of the West on their work."

St. Pierre satisfies this description. He starts with Steinbeck's touching goodbye to California, the passage in *Travels with Charley* (1962) in which he makes one last trip up Mount Frémont, the dominant landmark of his youth, from which he saw the whole of the Salinas Valley (or did if there was no low-lying fog that day), the valley about which

thirty years before he had written to his friend, George Albee, "I think I would like to write the story of the whole valley, and of all the farms and ranches in the wilder hills. I can see how I would like to do it so it would be the whole valley of the world."

And he did. And for millions of readers it still is. St. Pierre tells the California story briskly and smoothly. His excellent discussion of the origins, background, and writing of *The Grapes of Wrath*—with all the accompanying interruptions in Steinbeck's personal life—says about as much as can be said in fifteen pages.

In fact in just 115 pages total, St. Pierre tells us an immense amount about John Steinbeck, and intelligently assesses the novels and novelist. The compression occasionally squeezes a minor detail off the page: the purse-seiner, *Western Flyer*, seems to have gone to the Sea of Cortez without a captain; Pearl Buck is deprived of the Nobel Prize for Literature; Steinbeck's summer of 1923 at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Center gets surprisingly short shrift considering that the summer zoology course gave him the idea of the super-organism (later promoted to phalanx)—an idea which, for better or for worse, is everywhere in Steinbeck's work from 1933 to 1948.

Nevertheless, for the big picture, well limned, in a small frame, St. Pierre's book is the place to go. For the big picture in the big frame, see Benson. □

Two Californias: The Truth About the Split-State Movement.

By Michael DiLeo and Eleanor Smith. (Covelo: Island Press, 1983. 250 pp. \$10.95 paper.)

Reviewed by Gregory H. Tilles, instructor of history and political science, Solano Community College, Suisun City.

In the preface to this intriguing study of separatism in California, past, pres-

ent, and future, DiLeo and Smith boldly assert that they have composed "the complete anatomy of a feud, a venerable, deep-running, free-swinging, socio-political mother of a feud." For the most part, the book and the fascinating topic it dissects live up to this billing.

The authors devote considerable attention to the history of the idea of splitting California, emphasizing key issues which have brought various split-state drives to the fore over the last century and a half. During the Gold Rush years and the decades immediately following, for example, Southern Californians, feeling like the "very small tail to a very large kite," sought to separate themselves from the rest of the state and thereby avoid the disproportionate burden of state taxes imposed upon them by politically dominant goldiggers and wealthy entrepreneurs of the North. As the population of southern California grew in amazing proportions between 1900 and 1940 and the pendulum of power swung inexorably to the South, it was Northern Californians who took up the call for separation. Most recently, the diversion of Northern California water to the Southland, epitomized by the proposed Peripheral Canal, has spawned such separatist efforts as Senator Barry Keene's "Alta California" bill in the state legislature and a petition drive engineered by a Northern California group calling itself the Two Californias Committee.

Indeed, DiLeo and Smith confess that when they began this study, amid the heated debate which preceded the Peripheral Canal referendum vote of June 1982, they both had a strong sense that the creation of two Californias might be a good idea. However, their subsequent research convinced them that, on balance, the state would be better off continuing as a single entity. To support this conclusion the authors take the reader through the cultural and political dimensions of California separatism, contending that considerable mythology and unfounded folklore have distorted

the true picture of the "two" Californias. They assert that in the 1980s Northern and Southern California are not, in the final analysis, all that different, either in culture or political ideology. They also suggest that recent North-South enmity over water has been largely misdirected. In fact, they argue, the real culprit in the "theft" of Northern California water is not the profligate sidewalk sprayer or swimming pool owner of metropolitan Los Angeles but rather California agribusiness—a "Third California" which consumes some 85 percent of the state's water.

Each of the last three of this book's six tightly-woven chapters warrants brief special mention. Chapter 4 is an incisive analysis of the evolution of California water policy and politics, placing recent water controversies in clear historical perspective. Chapter 5—perhaps the best in the book—is especially provocative, offering a handbook on how to split the state, an investigation of the profound political obstacles in the way of such a move, and speculation on what a divided state would really be like. Chapter 6, a noble attempt to suggest a comprehensive plan that would satisfy the competing water demands of the three Californias and thus avoid a future split of the state, borders on the quixotic and leaves the reader unconvinced that Californians will ever find the political consensus necessary to effect such unified action.

The particular appeal of *Two Californias* lies in the obvious precision and thoroughness that went into its writing. The historian can readily excuse some careless factual errors—the text, for example, places the 1878 state constitutional convention in Monterey and identifies William Gwin's home state as Mississippi—and recognize, along with the general reader, that this study is obviously the work of able researchers who have painstakingly examined an impressive list of books, newspaper and periodical articles, and government studies. Moreover, this book is rich in thought-

fully selected illustrative materials—maps, charts, drawings, and photographs. The inclusion of a number of delightful political cartoons indicates DiLeo and Smith's willingness to convey the humorous side of this "serious business." Throughout, the text is written with flair and wit.

This tale of two Californias is clearly intelligent and entertaining reading. □

Overland to California with the Pioneer Line: The Gold Rush Diary of Bernard J. Reid.

Edited by Mary McDougall Gordon. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983. xii, 247 pp. \$19.95.)

Reviewed by Warren A. Beck, Professor of History, California State University, Fullerton, and the author of several books on the American West.

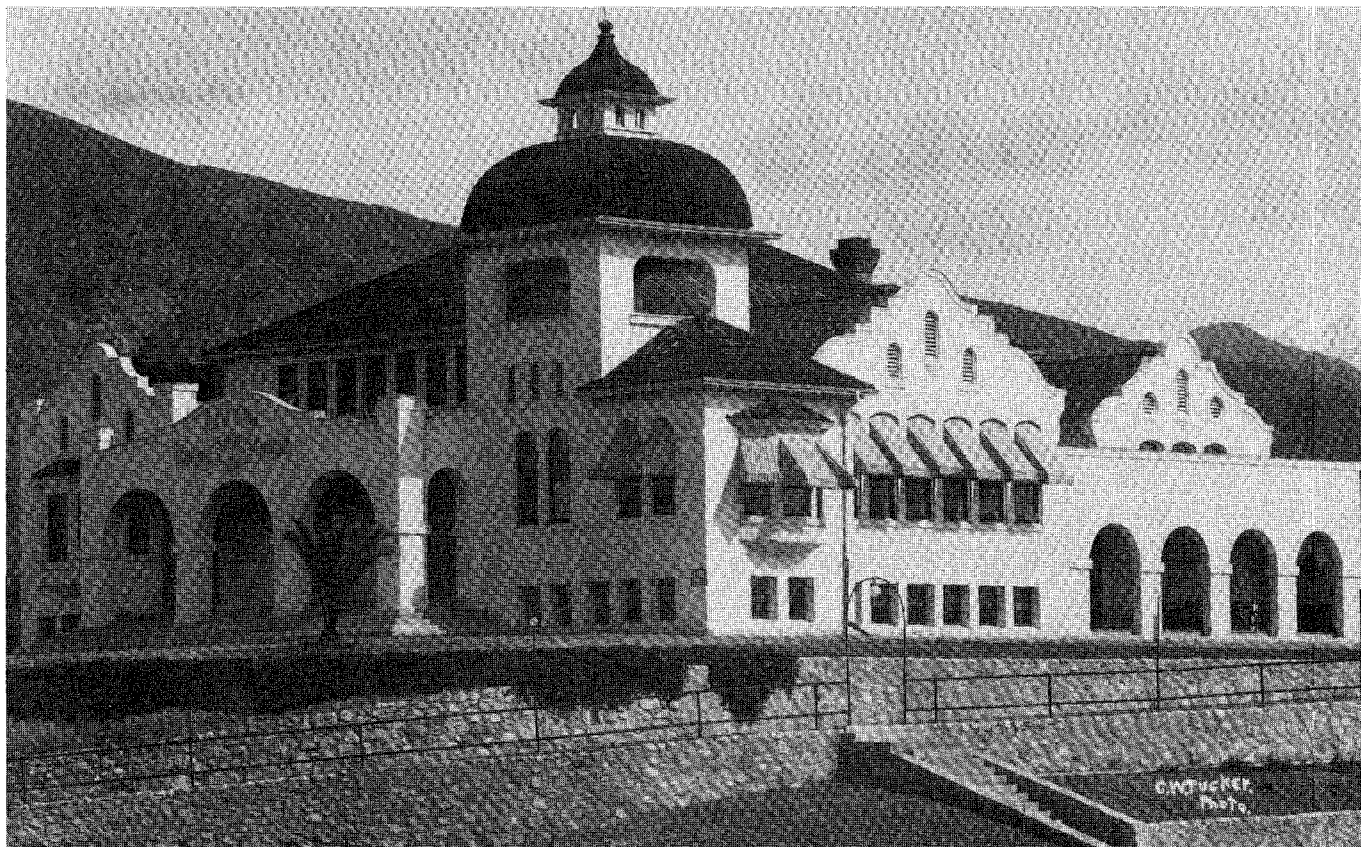
The California gold rush remains one of the most exciting episodes in America's history, and books about this dramatic event continue to pour from the presses. In recent years John M. Faragher's *Women and Men on the Overland Trail*, John D. Unruh's *The Plains Across*, and John P. Reid's *Law for the Elephant: Property and Social Behavior on the Overland Trail* have been highly successful. But as valuable as these commentaries are, the diaries, memoirs, and letters of those who struggled on the overland trail to reach the Garden of Eden supposed to be located in California are even more worthwhile. J.S. Holliday's *The World Rushed In* successfully combined the drama contained in an overland diary with letters from back home. *Overland to California with the Pioneer Line* is similar in that the diary is interspersed with letters, but the editor has also included brief biographies of those who were in the company as well as a summary of the life of the diarist both before and after the California ex-

perience. In addition, Mary McDougall Gordon has extensively consulted other diaries and sources about the gold rush. The historiographical detective work that went into the research is truly exceptional.

The diarist, Bernard J. Reid, was both typical and atypical of the Forty-Niners. Like so many Americans of the mid-nineteenth century, he was apparently "born with an itch in his bones." Although only twenty-six when he headed towards the goldfields, he had travelled in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia and lived and worked in several different places. He had difficulty settling on a vocation and at one time taught school, edited a newspaper, and worked as a surveyor. It was in the latter capacity that he moved to St. Louis in 1847 where he began his trek westward.

Reid was atypical among the Forty-Niners in that he paid \$200 to a private company, the Pioneer Line, to take him speedily and in comfort the gold fields. (They did neither). With a better-than-average education he appreciated the different flowers along the trail and apparently knew enough geology to wax eloquent in describing the unique formations in the City of Rocks. He was also more of a humanitarian than most of his contemporaries, and on one occasion he stood up to a group on the trail intent on hanging an Indian who they believed had run off their oxen. In the midst of a heated situation wherein Reid was in danger, the animals were found and the would-be executioners put aside their rope and treated the potential victim to dinner. Reid's rigid code of ethics is apparent throughout the diary and can be attributed to the fact that he was a devout Catholic. Incidentally, he makes the point that he encountered no religious hostility on the trail.

The adventures of Reid and his friends were similar to all who went to California overland. They were cursed with cholera in the early part of the trip and scurvy in the latter part. Many died en route, and Reid carefully records the names on



graves beside the trail. The dangers of fording or ferrying rivers are detailed, as well as the challenge of the desert and the crossing of the Sierra. He understood the trials and tribulations of the journey as the following indicates: "Perhaps there is no situation so trying upon the infirmities of human temper as a long trip like this under circumstances not favorable for promoting cheerfulness and good humor. Grown men are apt to become children again and make mouths at one another on very slight provocation" (p. 97). For those who believe that the trek overland was truly high adventure, here is another book on the subject well worth reading. □

California's Mission Revival.

By Karen J. Weitze. (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1984. xiv, 160 pp. \$22.50 paper.)

Reviewed by Eric Sandweiss, Historian at The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, who is working

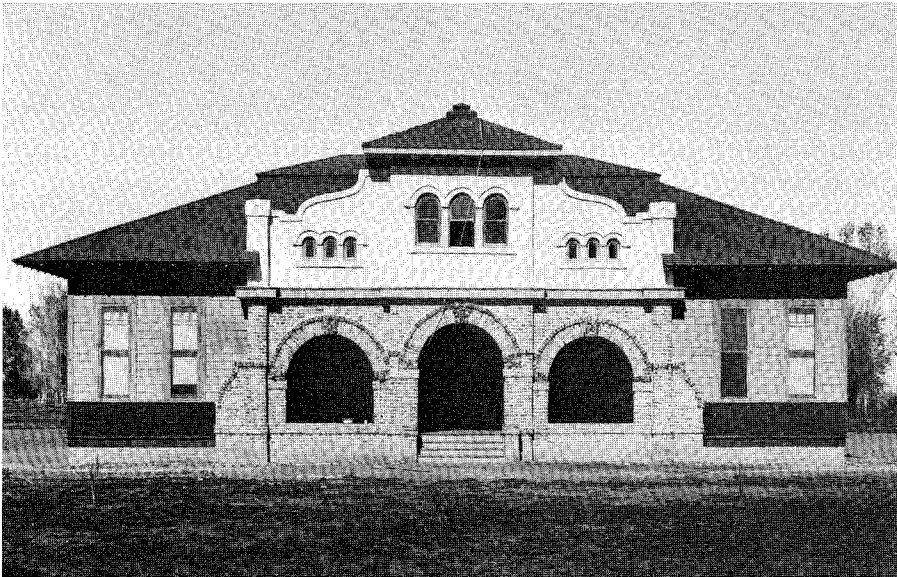
on a survey of the buildings of downtown San Francisco.

The study of architectural history has for some years been colored by a search for the origins of modernism. Architectural scholars often start from the unspoken question, "When did we begin thinking of buildings as we do today?" The answer has been found in any number of different places, for any number of different reasons. Whether the current notion of what is new reflects the aesthetic of functionalism and utility, or whether as in recent years it involves the creative use of symbolism and ornament, some kind of "modern" ideals may be detected anywhere one cares to look. We tend to treat each period as a step along the road of history, forgetting to stop and consider what it was to those who experienced it: the expression in bricks and mortar of a shared past and future, the shaping of common experiences and the definition of common goals.

This is what is most interesting about *California's Mission Revival*. Karen Weitze

has focused upon a period which perhaps more than most may be viewed as a fulcrum between tradition and innovation, between reverence for history and devotion to direct utility. At the same time, Weitze is careful to avoid the idiom's trap of pitting the one against the other, or of seeing in this particular point the ascendancy of modern architecture. Instead, she accurately portrays the variety—and even the confusion—of motivations and interpretations that were brought to this important architectural movement.

From the 1880s through the 1910s the stucco, tiles, gables, and towers of California's eighteenth-century Franciscan missions were copied and mimicked in thousands of houses, hotels, office buildings, schools, and train stations around the state. Mission-style buildings represented California in national fairs and expositions; they formed the basis for promotional literature and real-estate schemes; and they served as the focus for discussions on developing a national architectural style. Weitze traces this fascination with the missions



With towers, bell niches, and arcades, Citrus Union High School in Azusa (left) imitates a California mission. Less successful in camouflaging the building's purpose is the Mission Revival portico projecting out of a clapboard school house in El Centro. Bancroft Library

from its beginnings in mid-nineteenth century romantic literature to its eventual diffusion into further revivalism and avant garde experimentalism.

The inspirations for and implications of the Mission Revival were many, and it is to Weitze's credit that she does not gloss over them. A style that was based upon crude manual construction techniques came to symbolize the possibilities of technical advancements in reinforced concrete. A design vocabulary which emphasized flowing lines and odd shapes fed the imagination of more austere modernists like Irving Gill. A revival of rural religious simplicity served to promote big-time land speculation and suburbanization. As the author points out, Mission Revival had something for everyone: it was touted for school design on the grounds that it imparted high moral standards to students; it was used for train stations with the reasoning that such buildings echoed the function of the missions as way stations; and so on.

With this no less than any other cohesive architectural movement, hindsight has a way of putting simple variety into terms of struggle and conflict. The Mission Revival architect was a revivalist, yes, but the style he revived had a "mod-

ern" simplicity and enduring practicality. This kind of opposition was representative not so much of struggle or conflict as of a single diverse, but internally consistent outlook. Weitze is careful enough not to depict the Mission Revival as a battleground on which the principles of modernism emerged unscathed. She describes it instead as a single spot in the continuum of tradition and innovation that propels architectural change at all times. □

Committee of Vigilance: The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce Law and Order Committee, 1916-1919.

By Stephen C. Levi. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1983. vi, 154 pp. \$15.95.)

Reviewed by David J. Langum, Dean and Professor of Law, Old College School of Law, Reno, Nevada.

The Law and Order Committee of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce is a chapter in the troubled history of that city's labor relations during the early portion of the twentieth century. Organ-

ized in early July 1916 to deal with a specific strike-threatened commercial shutdown, its public popularity spread in the hysteria subsequent to the Preparedness Day bombing later in the same month. The author interprets the Committee as an aberration in the Chamber's "traditional role as a neutral observer in labor disputes" (p. 123) and owing its existence to "an ulterior driving design for San Francisco: the city-wide open shop" (p. 3). He concludes that the war boom of 1917 created profit potential great enough to make unskilled non-union labor unproductive and strikes intolerable, and therefore the business community's desire for an open shop yielded to financial success. The primary power of the Committee was thereby broken in 1917, and the Chamber of Commerce returned to a policy of nonintervention in labor disputes. Notwithstanding the author's conclusion, however, in the early 1920s the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce was still active in promoting the open shop, then under a new name, the "American Plan," and with a new organization, the "Industrial Association."

During the period of its power the Committee intervened in numerous labor disputes, providing non-union laborers as strikebreakers, hiring guards to protect non-union workers, obtaining judicial restraining orders, offering financial help to employers, promoting boycotts of recalcitrant businesses, entering the political process by lobbying for favorable legislation, and engaging generally in public relations activities on behalf of employers and the open shop. As a result of these endeavors the author concludes that the Law and Order Committee was in reality a committee of vigilance, not in the tradition of "quick, extra-legal action" but in a more modern "sophisticated marshalling of all of the resources within the business community . . . People were to die but the method of shoot-first-ask-questions-later had been subordinated to the use of political pressure and public manipu-

lation" (p. 3). This is such an attenuated notion of vigilantism that it is doubtful the lusty committees of 1851 and 1856 would acknowledge paternity. Besides, whether one likes the Law and Order Committee or loathes it, the fastening of a label does not appear to add much to analysis.

At times the author makes significant statements without any factual support. For example, it is undoubted that Charles Evans Hughes lost the 1916 presidential election because of his defeat in California. The author persuasively suggests this was more due to the Republican candidate's embroilment in a local San Francisco dispute, attending a luncheon in an establishment with an open shop plaque, than traditional explanations. But in asserting the Law and Order Committee's responsibility for the rejection of a compromise to temporarily remove the offending sign during the campaign luncheon, he resorts to pure speculation; employs such scholarly weasel words as "it can be safely assumed" and "the Committee undoubtedly realized"; and offers not a shred of factual evidence (p. 61). The same sort of unsupported allegation is made regarding the Committee's alleged role in the infamous Mooney-Billings trial. Although there is no question that the trial was a sham, the basis upon which the author draws in the Committee is speculative and without evidence (pp. 106-107, 128).

In other places the author cites undoubtedly biased evidence, without evaluation, for factual propositions. For example: the "Committee pressured Dyer Brothers to break off negotiations and declare . . . an open shop" (p. 91). The source cited is a union newspaper, the *Labor Clarion*. Another example: "The fact that the violence, in this case, had been because of the armed guards hired by the Committee" (p. 100, referring to the United Railroads strike). The source cited is the pro-union mayor, James R. Rolph.

This book is not for scholars, and therefore the cautions of this review to-

ward lacunae in proof should not deter the general reader. It is an easily read account of one aspect of San Francisco's labor history and presents in an interesting manner the interplay between politics and personalities in the 1916-17 phase of the struggle over the open shop. □

On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century.

By Richard Longstreth. (New York, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press for The Architectural History Foundation, New York, 1982. xiv, 455 pp. Forward by Donlyn Lyndon. \$40.00.)

Reviewed by Anne Bloomfield, consultant on Bay Area architectural history, whose articles have appeared in California History, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians and The Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects.

Most Californians can name at least one San Francisco architect at the turn of the century, the Palace of Fine Arts' beloved creator Bernard Maybeck. Almost as famous is attention-seeking Willis Polk, responsible for Filoli and those shingled houses on Russian Hill. Ernest Coxhead is known for his trend-setting shingled houses and churches, and from lecturer John Beach's delight in his architectural surprises. The last member of this quartet is A.C. Schweinfurth, whose premature death in 1900 concluded his strikingly individual designs with Berkeley's First Unitarian Church.

Longstreth concentrates on these men's pioneering work of the 1890s. He lays the foundation in academic eclecticism, the guiding principle of western-world architecture for half a century

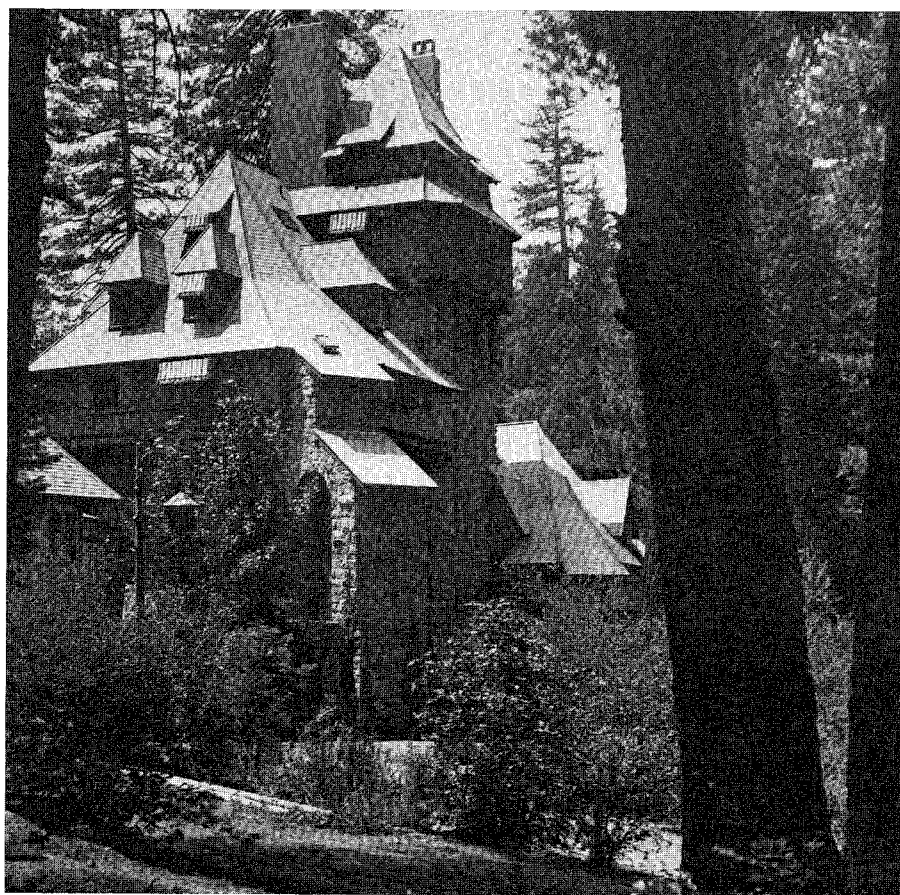
from the 1870s, which held that universal ideals of ordered and serene beauty, as taught at Paris' Ecole des Beaux Arts, should be clothed according to the client's program in a limitless choice of well-researched historical precedents.

Different chapters take up the four men's training, the cultural and physical setting, preparation by A. Page Brown, Coxhead's and Polk's rustic urban houses, their suburban and country houses, civic projects, and Schweinfurth's advocacy of California precedents. A penultimate chapter shows Polk and Coxhead's careers dwindling after 1900, the torch they lit diluted by competitors and followers. The triumphant ending leads into Maybeck's successes.

In revealing description, dissection of inspiration, and analysis of effect, Longstreth focuses on about one-fourth of the buildings and unexecuted projects listed in his exhaustive appendix of Coxhead, Polk, Brown, and Schweinfurth's works.

Longstreth's main concerns can be illustrated by comparing three accounts of the house Maybeck built for Charles Keeler: Longstreth's, Kenneth Cardwell's in *Bernard Maybeck* (Peregrine Smith, 1977) and Freudenham & Sussman's in *Building with Nature* (Peregrine Smith, 1974). The last relates the house to Keeler's ideal of fitting buildings into the landscape, to Japanese architecture and to Maybeck's principles of emphasizing structure as ornament. Cardwell discusses it among what Maybeck called his "Gothic houses," stressing German precedents, natural redwood, steep roofs, and the post-and-beam structural system enriching the interior.

Longstreth relates the structural system, "a veritable forest of timberwork" (320), to a twelfth-century Norwegian stave church, which he illustrates from a book Maybeck had been translating. Guided by information from Keeler's daughter, Longstreth has reconstructed the house's original plan, enabling this reader for the first time to understand the photographs in all three books.



Wyntoon, Maybeck's mountain lodge built for Phoebe Apperson Hearst in Siskiyou County, embodies dreams about what a medieval castle should be. CHS, San Francisco

Other illustrations show a preliminary design, the built exterior, two interiors and another prototype. The author traces inspiration for the house to German architecture, to Coxhead and Polk's "use of diminutively scaled elements to make a small, inexpensive design seem grand" (318), and to Viollet-le-Duc's fascination with medieval structure.

Only very minor statements by Longstreth seem questionable: echoing Polk's total disdain for San Francisco's prior architects, claiming the city of 1890 had little open space besides Golden Gate Park, ignoring difficulties for pedestrians in Polk's grand project for the intersection of Market and Embarcadero, attributing much of A. Page Brown's work to Schweinfurth. Longstreth may have become the partisan of his architects.

This book's handsome design and other accessories are a scholar's delight.

Each illustration falls within a page of the relevant text. The end-of-book footnotes have—oh joy!—text page numbers as running heads so the occasional note reader can find the one he wants. Scholastic and illustrative debts are freely acknowledged in individual notes and captions.

Longstreth really sees the buildings, reads their essences from photo, drawing, life, and oral history; he makes the reader see and understand them too. Coxhead's Pasadena church tower was "woven out of shingles" (48). In his living room for the Murdocks, "ornateness and simplicity confront one another" (134). Three Polk houses in Marin County "perform acrobatics with image, space and scale" (148). His city house for Bourn is a "warren at ground level" (215). Schweinfurth made a "tough, prickly mass" of the Moody house in Berkeley (293). Maybeck generally

"mined a spectrum of theoretical approaches" (325).

Longstreth countermines, successfully probing the spread of ideas and their interpretation by four creative individuals. □

William Byron Rumford: The Life and Public Services of a California Legislator.

By Lawrence P. Crouchett. (El Cerrito: Downey Place Publishing House, Inc., 1984. xxv, 152 pp. \$14.95 hardcover.)

Reviewed by Albert S. Broussard, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Southern Methodist University.

Lawrence P. Crouchett's *William Byron Rumford: The Life and Public Services of a California Legislator* is the first full length biography of a black California legislator. The biography spans Rumford's formative years in the Arizona Territory through his nine terms as a state assemblyman between 1948 and 1966. Crouchett also examines Rumford's post-legislative career, including his narrow defeat for the California senate in 1966 and his role in the economic and political development of the Bay Area Black communities. Through Rumford's multifaceted political career, we glimpse the status of Black Californians as they struggled for civil rights during the post-World War II years, as well as the interaction between Rumford and California's most influential white politicians.

Although perceived as a moderate, Rumford possessed the most successful civil rights record of any California legislator during his eighteen years in office. He introduced and supported numerous bills which ended segregation throughout the state, including the desegregation of the California National Guard, the creation of a permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission, and the Fair Housing Act of 1963, which prohibited discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. While Crouchett also credits

the support of Governors Earl Warren and Edmund G. Brown for these legislative triumphs, Rumford, he argues, was the political catalyst.

A biography of William Byron Rumford is long overdue. The book is useful in detailing the rise and maturation of Rumford's political career, and it also scantily explores discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations against blacks throughout the state. California's housing discrimination, in particular, resembled the pattern that evolved in northern cities such as Chicago, which Arnold P. Hirsch documented in his recent book, *Making the Second Ghetto, Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago, 1983). Finally, Crouchett illustrates the conservative backlash by both California voters and politicians following the passage of the 1963 Fair Housing Act.

Despite its promise, the book is poorly organized, contains tangential material concerning Rumford's family, and lacks sufficient analysis. The biography reads like a personal memoir of black politicians reminiscing about the joys and tribulations of California politics, rather than a comprehensive, analytical expose of Rumford, his major achievements, and his shortcomings. Numerous organizations that fought for civil rights during this era are neglected such as the Bay Area Civic Unity councils, California Federation For Civic Unity, American Council on Race Relations, American Civil Liberties Union, and the West Coast Regional Office of the NAACP. Moreover, Crouchett omitted both footnotes and bibliography, which makes this work of limited value to serious scholars. Thus, Crouchett's work has utility as a general introduction to the subject, but the definitive biography of William Byron Rumford and his generation of black leaders has not been written. □

The New Deal and the West.

By Richard Lowitt. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

xviii, 283 pp. \$25.00 hardcover.)

Reviewed by Charles E. Larsen, May Treat Morrison Professor of American History, Mills College, author of The Good Fight: The Life and Times of Ben B. Lindsey (1972), contributor to American Journal of Legal History, American West, Dictionary of American Biography, and Pacific Historical Review. Professor Larsen is currently working on a study of Westbrook Pegler.

Defining the West as that part of the continental United States west of the eastern borders of the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, Richard Lowitt, best known as the biographer of Senator George Norris, explores the impact of federal programs in this vast area during the Depression, giving special attention to land use, water resources, petroleum policy, forestry and national parks. Although the book is largely a political and administrative history, there is a lengthy chapter on "The State of the West, 1933-1934" dealing primarily with economic and social conditions as described by Lorena Hickok in her letters to Harry Hopkins. A short chapter, "Whither the American Indian?" suggests some of the limitations of New Deal policies toward Native Americans but does not examine them in any depth. The research, especially in secondary sources and government reports, is prodigious, but Lowitt has also selectively used primary sources, notably the Roosevelt papers at Hyde Park and the Harold Ickes papers in the Library of Congress.

Lowitt sympathetically and dramatically describes the involvement of New Deal agencies in bringing relief to the farmers and farm workers of the Great Plains as they suffered through drought, dust storms, and grasshopper infestation. He has high praise for occasional administrative improvisation and inter-agency cooperation when Congress proved dilatory or obstructionist. A case

in point was the proposed shelterbelt project for planting trees in strips from Texas to the Dakotas as a means of lessening wind erosion. When Congress initially failed to appropriate the necessary funds, the Forest Service, W.P.A., and the Civilian Conservation Corps cooperated to start the project.

Beyond the Great Plains, the major figure in the West, Lowitt argues persuasively, was Harold Ickes. Ickes' clout as head of the Department of Interior assured his influence on matters dominant west of the Plains such as conservation, hydroelectric power, national parks, and (to some degree) mineral policies. A shrewd and aggressive administrator, "Honest Harold" recognized that his power was enhanced by his position as Public Works Administrator, which gave him considerable leverage in determining priorities for projects in the Inland Empire, the heart of his domain. An example of Ickes' influence of special interest to Californians was his allotment of \$38 million for Boulder Dam (as it was then called), thus furthering completion of the project well ahead of schedule. P.W.A. funds also accelerated completion of the two great bridges across San Francisco Bay, although both were pre-New Deal non-federal projects.

Although Lowitt's sympathies with Roosevelt and the New Deal are clear, he is not uncritical. As others have suggested before him, Lowitt finds some New Deal "planning" excessively fragmented, and he is occasionally critical of Roosevelt for bowing too quickly to expediency when major economic interests opposed him. Two major examples were the failure to adopt a sound conservation policy toward oil and federal subsidization of silver producers.

There is a final irony implicit in the thesis of this book. It is Lowitt's contention that the New Deal uplifted much of the West from economic disaster and paved the way for its general prosperity today. Looking at election results from the region in recent years, old New Dealers might conclude that it was a Pyrrhic victory. □

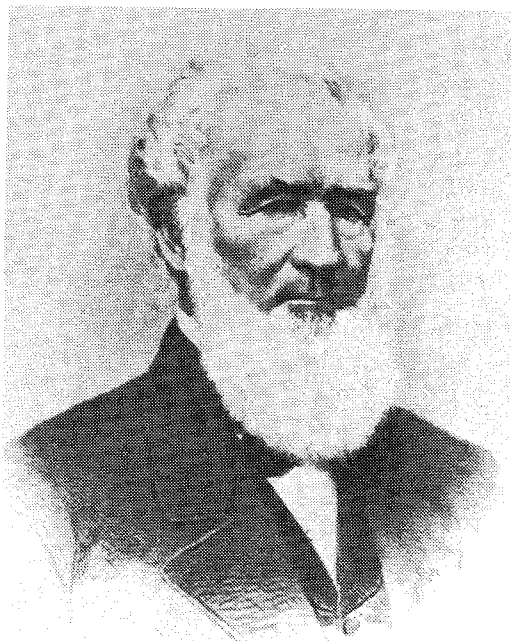
CALIFORNIA CHECK LIST

by Bruce L. Johnson, CHS Director of Libraries

- The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent publications, including reprints or revised editions, that need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler for this list: Author, title, name and address of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, and price.
- Albright, Thomas. *Twentieth-Century Art in the San Francisco Bay Region: An Illustrated History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. \$39.95 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper). Order from: University of California Press; 2120 Berkeley Way; Berkeley, CA 94720.
- Baer, Morley (photographer). *The Wilder Shore*. Text by David Rains Wallace; Foreword by Wallace Stegner. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1984. \$50.00. Order from: Westminster Distribution Center; Random House, Inc.; 400 Hahn Road; Westminster, MD 21157.
- Bail, Eli. *From Railway to Freeway: Pacific Electric and the Motor Coach*. Interurbans Special 90. Glendale: Interurban Press, 1984. \$29.95 (\$1.50 postage). Order from: Interurban Press, Post Office Box 6444; Glendale, CA 91205.
- Bell, Geoffrey. *The Golden Gate and the Silver Screen* [San Francisco in the History of the Cinema]. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; and New York and London: Cornwall Books, 1984. \$24.95. Order from: Cornwall Books; 440 Forsgate Drive; Cranbury, NJ 08512.
- Bohakel, Charles A. *Historic Tales of East Contra Costa County*. Volume 1. Antioch: Charles A. Bohakel, 1984. \$5.00 (paper; includes tax and postage). Order from: Charles A. Bohakel; Post Office Box 817; Antioch, CA 94509.
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- California Women Tell How to Win and Lose in Politics*. Berkeley: Regional Oral History Office, 1984. May be purchased at cost for deposit in noncirculating collections. Contact: Regional Oral History Office, Room 486; The Bancroft Library; University of California; Berkeley, CA 94720.
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- Engberg, Robert (ed.). *John Muir Summering in the Sierra*. 1874-75, in the San Francisco Evening Bulletin; reprinted, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984. \$21.50 (cloth), \$12.95 (paper). Order from: University of Wisconsin Press; 114 North Murray Street; Madison, WI 53715.
- Engelbert, Ernest A. (ed.), with Ann F. Scheuring. *Competition for California Water: Alternative Resolutions*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. \$8.95 (paper). Order from: University of California Press; 2120 Berkeley Way; Berkeley, CA 94720.
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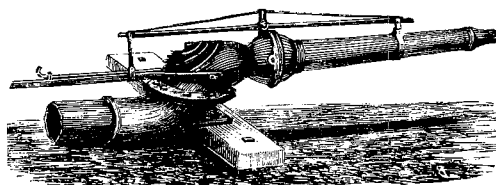
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NOTES

Snyder, "Buildings and Bridges," pp. 280-293

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2. J. Leonard, "A Memory Outline of the Pioneer Leonard Family of Union City, Michigan," October 2, 1941 (the author is indebted to Leonard's great-nephew, Gary Knecht, for a copy of this manuscript); L. Byington, *The History of San Francisco*, II (Chicago and San Francisco, 1931); 208.
3. P. Collins, *Concrete: The Vision of a New Architecture* (New York, 1959), pp. 60-61; see also C. Condit, *American Building* (Chicago, 1968).
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10. This periodical was later published as *Architect and Engineer* and finally as *Western Architect and Engineer of California*, August 1905, p. 79.
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12. J. Leonard, San Francisco, to S.K. Lindley, Los Angeles, n.d., L.S. A copy of the letter, as printed in the Union City, Michigan, newspaper in 1906, was furnished to the author by Gary Knecht.
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14. *Structural Association of San Francisco Weekly Bulletin*, later *Engineering Supplement to American Builders Review*. The official organ of the Association, the Supplement ran

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18. "The Hotel St. Mark," *American Builders Review*, November 1906, pp. 38-43; E. Soule, "A Reinforced Concrete Hotel Building in Oakland, Cal.," *Engineering Record*, December 21, 1907, pp. 686-688.
19. Telephone interview with Kimberley Gresham, Monterey County Historical Society, November 2, 1981; *Architect and Engineer of California*, August 1908, p. 24.
20. Included among these graduates were A.V. Saph, E.L. Soule, D.M. McPhetres, and W.P. Day. All went on to important engineering careers. J. Leonard, see articles in *Architect and Engineer*, June 1906, February and August 1908; C. Derleth, Jr., "Buildings of Reinforced Concrete," paper read at 34th Annual Meeting of the Fire Underwriters Assn. of the Pacific, San Francisco, January 11-12, 1910.
21. J. Leonard, "The Failure of the Bixby Hotel," *Architect and Engineer of California*, November 1906, p. 48 ff.
22. J. Simons, "The Bixby Hotel Disaster as Viewed by a Brick Man," *Architect and Engineer of California*, December 1906, pp. 51-52; T. Keough, "Failure of the Bixby Hotel," *Architect and Engineer of California*, December 1906, pp. 67-70.
23. Advertisements for the firm listing services performed and building inspected appeared in *Architect and Engineer of California*, August 1906 and August 1907.
24. "Popularity of Reinforced Concrete in San Francisco," *Architect and Engineer of California*, September 1907, p. 77; "Talks on Fireproof Construction," *Architect and Engineer of California*, October 1908, p. 76; J. Leonard, "The Use of Reinforced Concrete in San Francisco and Vicinity," *National Association of Cement Users, Proceedings*, 1910, p. 7.
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26. *Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks of San Francisco and Northern California*, W.A. Myers (ed.) (San Francisco, October 1977).
27. W. Day, "A Reinforced Concrete Railroad Bridge," *Western Engineering*, May 1913, pp. 373-378.
28. W. Day, "Oakland Avenue Reinforced-Concrete Bridge in Piedmont, California," *Engineering News*, September 14, 1911; "A California Concrete Bridge in Mission Style," *Concrete-Cement Age*, January 1912, p. 7.
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30. F. Panhorst, "Century of Bridge Progress," *California Highways and Public Works*, Centennial Edition, September 9, 1950, p. 123; G. Tinkham, *History of Stanislaus County* (Los Angeles, 1921), pp. 79-80.
31. "Historical Property Survey Report for the Proposed Replacement of the Honcut Road Bridge on Honcut Creek, Yuba County, California," Yuba County Department of Public Works, Marysville; Tinkham, *Stanislaus*.
32. L. Aldrich and J. Leonard, *Report of Highway Research at Pittsburg, California, 1921 and 1922*, n.p., n.d.; D. Barnes, "Highway Research Conducted at Pittsburg, California in The Years of 1921 and 1922," University of California, Berkeley, November 3, 1924.
33. Interview with Mr. Harold B. Hammill, November 17, 1981; (Hammill was Leonard's employee in the early 1920s); "Bridge Report, S. Fk. American River (Chili Bar)," California Department of Transportation, Sacramento, July 31, 1939; H. Hammill, "Five Highway Bridges Across the Van Duzen River, California," *Western Construction News*, March 25, 1927, pp. 38-39; "The Upper Blackburn Grade Cutoff Bridge," *Concrete Highways and Public Improvements*, December 1927, p. 274; "The San Francisco Bay Bridge Project," *Architect and Engineer*, February 1926, pp. 104-107.
34. "Give Us Better Inspection," *Architect and Engineer*, February 1926, pp. 104-107; "Leonard Urged As Inspector," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 10, 1928, p. 10; "S.F. Engineer Takes Office," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1928, p. 4; "New Building Inspector," *Architect and Engineer* August 1934, p. 62.
35. J. Leonard, "A California Uniform Building Code," *Architect and Engineer*, April 1928, p. 106; "Am. S. C. Engineers Addressed by Editor," *Architect and Engineer*, July 1937, p. 60.
36. "Engineers With Bay Exposition," *Architect and Engineer*, February 1936, p. 58; "Architects and Engineers," *Architect and Engineer*, November 1942, p. 47.

Hoffman, "Martin Aguirre," pp. 294-304.

1. The leading proponent of Chicano resistance to Anglo rule is Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (New York: Harper and Row, 2nd ed., 1981), Chapters 1-5. See also Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), pp. 130-131; Pedro Castillo and Albert Camarillo, eds., *Furia y Muerte: Los Bandidos Chicanos* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Center, Monograph No. 4, University of California, Los Angeles, 1973); and Carlos Larralde, *Mexican-American Movements and Leaders* (Los Alamitos: Hwong Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 111, 113.
2. Ramon F. Adams' classic bibliographical treatise on west-

- ern outlaws and gunmen, *Six-Guns and Saddle Leather* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, rev. and enl. ed., 1969), contains numerous entries for Murieta, Vasquez, Cortina, and Cortez, but none for Aguirre. The mundane tasks of peace officers in the West are recorded in Frank Richard Prassel, *The Western Peace Officer: A Legacy of Law and Order* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).
3. Margaret Romer, "The Story of Martin Aguirre, Famed Los Angeles County Sheriff," *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 43 (June 1961), 125–136. Romer's article is heavily based on the obituary articles for Aguirre in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1929, and personal interviews with people who knew Aguirre.
Aguirre seems to have suffered from an above-average number of factual errors concerning events in his life, possibly because of unqualified acceptance of the details in the obituary articles and oral reminiscences. The *New York Times*, February 27, 1929, claimed Aguirre had served as sheriff "for ten years." The famous flood of January 19, 1886, has been variously dated by writers as occurring on February 22 and in 1884. Romer has Aguirre elected sheriff in 1887; Leonard Pitt, *Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 269, put the date in 1885. Such errors have been minor pitfalls in retracing Aguirre's career.
 4. Mary H. Haggland, "Don Jose Antonio Aguirre: Spanish Merchant and Ranchero," *Journal of San Diego History*, 29 (Winter 1983), 54–68. Romer, borrowing heavily from Harry Carr, *Los Angeles, City of Dreams* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1935), pp. 321–322, states that Aguirre's mother died when Martin was two years old. Ruth Pico, "The Girl Who Runs a Cattle Ranch," *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, April 26, 1931, p. 8, and *An Illustrated History of Los Angeles County, California* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1889), p. 701, correctly notes it was Aguirre's father who died.
 5. Biographical details are based on Romer, "Story of Martin Aguirre," pp. 125–128; John Steven McGroarty, *Los Angeles: From the Mountains to the Sea* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1921), III, 737; *An Illustrated History*, p. 701; Carr, *Los Angeles*, pp. 321–322; and Pico, "Girl Who Runs a Cattle Ranch," p. 8. All sources have minor disagreements in details, especially as to dates.
 6. "Constable" and "deputy sheriff" were apparently used interchangeably, although some were elected and others were appointed. Aguirre's first elected position was as an elected county constable for the term 1886–1888.
 7. Boyle Workman, *The City that Grew* (Los Angeles: Southland Publishing Co., 1936), p. 228.
 8. *Los Angeles Daily Times*, January 20, 1886.
 9. *Los Angeles Daily Times*, January 20, 1886, offers a contemporary account oddly ignored by many later writers. For a modern description, see Dudley Gordon, "To the Rescue," *Westways*, 69 (May 1977), 20. Other versions include Romer, "Story of Martin Aguirre," p. 129; William Andrew Spalding, *William Andrew Spalding: Los Angeles News-
paperman*, ed. Robert V. Hine (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1961), pp. 122–123; and Carr, *Los Angeles, City of Dreams*, p. 322. Carr's account gives an incorrect date for the flood as does the biographical sketch of Aguirre in McGroarty, *Los Angeles*, III, 737. A different version of the events of January 19, 1886, appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1929, in the obituary articles tracing Aguirre's career. In the second version no mention was made of the streetcar, only that Aguirre rescued people directly from the river. Carr based his 1935 book's version on the obituary article he himself wrote for the *Times* on February 26, 1929; Romer closely followed the Carr version. The accounts vary as to how many people were rescued by Aguirre; 19 and 21 are the usual numbers.
 10. *Los Angeles Daily Times*, January 23, 1886.
 11. Robert W. Blew, "Vigilantism in Los Angeles, 1835–1874," *Southern California Quarterly*, 54 (Spring 1972), 11–30; Glenn S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1944).
 12. *Los Angeles Times*, October 21 and 25, and November 5, 1888. Emphasis in the original.
 13. Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, pp. 269–271; *Los Angeles Times*, November 8 and 9, 1888. The city vote was much closer—6,349 to 5,388—a point noted by Richard Griswold del Castillo in his careful tracing of electoral patterns in Los Angeles. He attributed this pattern not to loss in political representation by Californios but to declining numerical strength in the face of Anglo-American immigration. Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850–1890: A Social History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 160, 162.
 14. *Los Angeles Evening Express*, November 22, 1889.
 15. Carr, *Los Angeles, City of Dreams*, pp. 322–323; cf. *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1929, the obituary article written by Carr.
 16. *Los Angeles Evening Express*, May 3 and August 24, 1889; *Los Angeles Times*, May 3–5, and June 28, 1889. Unaccountably, the *Times* report of May 3 identified Renault as "Jerry Smith."
 17. *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1889; *Los Angeles Evening Express*, May 20 and June 27, 1889.
 18. *Los Angeles Evening Express*, August 23, 24, and 26, 1889; *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1889. No mention was made of the resolution of the rape charge.
 19. *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1889.
 20. Examples of Aguirre at work can be seen in the *Los Angeles Evening Express*, September 2 and 24, October 12, November 22, 25–27, and 30, and December 2, 1889.
 21. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1889.
 22. *Los Angeles Herald*, October 10 and 12, 1890.
 23. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1890.
 24. *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1890.
 25. *Los Angeles Herald*, October 11, 1890.
 26. *Ibid.*, November 5 and 6, 1890.
 27. John Kendall, "Sheriff—a Hand-Me-Down Job Held by Only Three People in 50 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 1972, describes the nonpartisan blandness of modern elections at the county level. Voters would have to guess

the political affiliation of a present-day candidate for sheriff.

28. H. Brett Melendy and Benjamin F. Gilbert, *The Governors of California: Peter H. Burnett to Edmund G. Brown* (Georgetown, Calif.: Talisman Press, 1965), p. 259; *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1899.
29. Romer, "Story of Martin Aguirre," pp. 130-131; McGroarty, *Los Angeles*, III, 738; *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1929.
30. Kenneth Lamott, *Chronicles of San Quentin: The Biography of a Prison* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 161.
31. Ed. Morrell, *The Twenty-Fifth Man* (Montclair, N.J.: New Era Publishing Co., 1924), p. 304.
32. Charles Howard Shinn, "The California Penal System," *Popular Science Monthly*, 54 (March 1899), 644-654.
33. California Board of Prison Directors, *Biennial Report of the State of California for the Fiftieth and Fifty-First Fiscal Years, 1898-1900* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1900), pp. 52-53.
34. Aguirre's statement is quoted in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1929. Donald Lowrie, *My Life in Prison* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1912), p. 77. The certificate is in the San Jacinto Municipal Museum, San Jacinto, California. I am grateful to Mary H. Haggland of Riverside, California, for calling my attention to it.
35. *San Francisco Call*, May 24-27, 1902; Melendy and Gilbert, *Governors of California*, p. 270.
36. *Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 1902.
37. *San Francisco Call*, August 10, 1902.
38. *Ibid.*, August 19-20, 1902.
39. *Ibid.*, August 21-22, 1902.
40. *Ibid.*, August 23 and 31, 1902; *Los Angeles Times*, August 25 and 30, 1902; Lamott, *Chronicles*, p. 163.
41. *San Francisco Call*, July 3, 13, and 21, 1903.
42. Lowrie, *My Life in Prison*, p. 207.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 85; *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1903; *San Francisco Call*, March 1, 1902. On March 4, 1902, the *Call* editorially defended Aguirre's use of the strait jacket.
44. Morrell, *Twenty-Fifth Man*, pp. 312-313. Note the photograph on p. 310. See also Lowrie, *My Life in Prison*, pp. 208-220; Jack London, *The Star Rover* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), pp. 23-33.
45. Romer, "Story of Martin Aguirre," p. 131. According to the *San Francisco Call*, July 30, 1903, however, at the end of his term Aguirre expressed a willingness to continue working at San Quentin, even as a subordinate under the new warden.
46. The box and scroll are in the possession of Mrs. Ruth Pico of Riverside, California. Mrs. Pico is Aguirre's niece. It is possible that the date on the scroll should have been 1903, not 1902, since the presentation was logically made as Aguirre prepared to leave at the end of his term.
47. *Los Angeles Record*, October 11, 1928. The article erroneously gave Aguirre's age as of the interview as 84.
48. In 1980 the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department organized an exhibit featuring Aguirre and his times.
- Dutka, "California Gold," pp. 313-319
1. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1848; *New York Herald*, December 9, 1848. The subject of gold in California, in all its aspects, appeared in newspaper editorials, letters to the editor, news columns, and advertisements.
2. *New York Herald*, August 19, 1848.
3. *New-York Daily Tribune*, September 16, 1848. "W.C." was probably the Reverend Walter Colton, Alcalde of Monterey.
4. *New-York Daily Tribune*, September 20, 1848.
5. *New York Herald*, September 27, 1848.
6. *New York Herald*, October 2, 1848.
7. *New York Herald*, November 28, 1848.
8. *The Evening Post*, October 19, 1848; *New York Herald*, December 2, 1848.
9. *New-York Daily Tribune*, November 27, 1848.
10. *New York Herald*, December 8, 1848.
11. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1848; *New York Herald*, December 9, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 7, 1848; *New York Herald*, December 11, 1848.
12. *New York Herald*, December 7, 11, 1848.
13. *New York Herald*, December 10, 11, 18, 1848.
14. *The Evening Post*, December 13, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 13, 1848.
15. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 13, 1848; *The Evening Post*, December 11, 1848.
16. *The Evening Post*, December 18, 1848.
17. *New York Herald*, December 19, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 19, 1848; *New York Herald*, December 23, 1848.
18. *New York Herald*, December 9, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 19, 1848.
19. *New York Herald*, December 13, 1848, *The Evening Post*, December 18, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 21, 1848.
20. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 12, 1848.
21. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 15, 1848; *The Evening Post*, December 16, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 18, 1848.
22. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 21, 27, 1848; *The Evening Post*, December 18, 1848. The advice about the pursuit of agriculture was well-intentioned but no doubt unrealistic for emigrants from an urban environment such as New York City.
23. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1848; *New York Herald*, December 9, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 14, 1848.
24. *New York Herald*, December 11, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 18, 19, 13, 1848.
25. *The Evening Post*, December 18, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 9, 1848; *The Evening Post*, December 11, 1848; *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 19, 29, 1848.
26. *New-York Daily Tribune*, December 14, 11, 1848.
27. *The Evening Post*, December 11, 1848.
28. Compiled from data in the *New York Herald*, April 14, 1849.
29. *New York Herald*, December 9, 1848.

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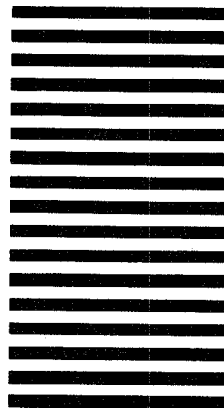
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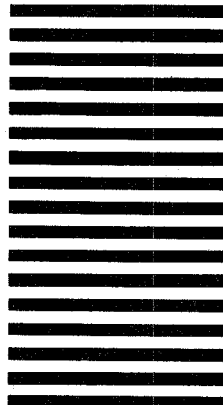
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